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From the Mask taken from his Features after his death. in S.t Onofrio.

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LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO;

WITH

AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL ACCOUNT OF HIS WRITINGS,

BY

JOHN BLACK.

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CONTENTS

OF

VOLUME SECOND.

CHAPTER XIII.

Tasso flies from Ferrara, and visits his sister in the habit of a shepherd.—Resides at Sorrento.—Wishes to return to the court of Alphonso.—Departs to Rome.—Solicits to be received at Ferrara, and returns thither.—Becomes discontented, and again leaves that city.—Visits Mantua.—Padua.—Venice.—And Urbino.—His temporary happiness there, and final dissatisfaction.—Departs to Turin. - - - - - - 1

CHAPTER XIV.

Hospitality which Tasso meets with in his journey to Piedmont.—He is repulsed by the guards from the gates of Turin.—His admission into the city, kind reception by the Marquis Philip of Este, and temporary comfort.—Writes to Cardinal Albano that he repents of his suspicions, and will endeavour to conquer them.—Composes a Dialogue on Nobility.—History of, and remarks on that mode of composition.—Tasso returns to Ferrara.—Is coldly received, and confined in the hospital of St Anne. - - - - - - - 37

CHAPTER XV.

Harsh treatment of Tasso in the hospital.—He requests the intercession of different princes for his deliverance.—Writes his Dialogue, the Messenger.—Extracts from that work.—Publication of a mutilated edition of the Jerusalem Delivered.—Death of the Princess Leonora of Este.—Examination of the hypothesis which attributes the mental alienation and imprisonment of Tasso to his love of this Princess. - - - - - 60

CHAPTER XVI.

Other editions of the Jerusalem, and grief of its author on this account.—Letter, in which he gives a narrative of his melancholy condition.—Publication of his 'Rime,' corrected by Guarini.—Offence given by his Dialogue, "Gonzaga, or of Honest Pleasure."—Tasso's prolonged indisposition.—Continuation of his Jerusalem.—He employs himself in writing Dialogues. - - - 93

CHAPTER XVII.

Controversy of the Academy Della Crusca with Tasso.—Comparative merit of that poet and of Ariosto. - - - - - 119

CHAPTER XVIII.

Tasso petitions the city of Bergamo, to make application for his release.—Writes a Discourse in praise of Matrimony.—Gives an account of a Folletto or Sprite, which molests him in the hospital.—Is seized with a violent fever, of which he thinks himself supernaturally cured.—Is set at liberty by the influence of the Prince of Mantua. - - - - - - 157

CHAPTER XIX.

Tasso leaves Ferrara, and goes to Mantua.—His comfortable situation there, and literary employments.—Publishes his father's poem Floridante. Becomes tired of Mantua.—Miscellaneous circumstances.—Is invited to read ethics and criticism at Genoa.—Visits Bergamo.—Tires of that city, and wishes to go to Rome.—Returns to Mantua.—Publishes his Torrismondo.—Remarks on this tragedy. - - - - - - 84

CHAPTER XX.

Tasso leaves Mantua.—Visits Loretto.—Arrives at Rome.—Composes verses in praise of Sixtus V.—His sanguine hopes, and final disappointment.—Writes to his sister.—Visits Naples, and takes up his residence in the Monastery of Mount Olivet.—Becomes acquainted with Manso, Marquis of Villa.—Miscellaneous circumstances.—Attends Manso to Bisaccio.—Converses with a spirit.—Attempt to account for this phantasm.—Tasso returns to Rome. - 212

CHAPTER XXI.

Distressful situation of Tasso on his arrival at Rome.—He abides in the monastery of Santa Maria Nuova.—His literary employments.—Is dismissed the house of Cardinal Gonzaga.—Resides in an hospital.—Is invited to Florence.—Graciously received by the Grand Duke.—Returns to Rome.—His disappointments there.—Tasso leaves Rome, and visits Mantua. - - - 247

CHAPTER XXII.

Literary employments of Tasso at Mantua.—He tires of that city, and returns to Rome.—Visits Naples.—Is hospitably entertained by the Prince of Conca.—Resides with Manso.—Milton.—Begins a poem on the Creation.—His lawsuit.—Departs from Naples.—Receives a high compliment from a Robber on his journey.—Is warmly patronised by Cardinal Cynthio Aldobrandino, nephew of Pope Clement VIII.—Dedicates to that Ecclesiastic his "Gerusalemme Conquistata."—Writes a "Judgment," to prove the superiority of this poem to the Jerusalem Delivered.—Death of Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga.—Remarks on the "Sette Giornate." - - - - - - 273

CHAPTER XXIII.

Tasso leaves Rome, and visits Naples.—Dialogue on Friendship, addressed by him to Manso.—State of his lawsuit.—He writes a Latin poem.—Furnishes the Prince of Venosa with madrigals for his musical compositions.—Desires a reconciliation with the Duke of Ferrara.—Is invited to Rome to be crowned in the Capitol.—His gracious reception from the Pope, who bestows on him a pension.—Anecdotes concerning him.—Aggravation of his distempers.—Requests to be

carried to the monastery of Sant' Onofrio.—His last letter to Constantini.—His death and funeral.—Epitaph. - - - 305

CHAPTER XXIV.

Reflections on the general infelicity of the epic poets.—Description of the person of Tasso.—His dress.—Conversation.—Christian virtues and moral qualities.—His defects.—Intellectual character and endowments.—Excellence of his poetical taste.—Reflections on the beauties and defects of the Jerusalem Delivered.—Celebrated authors, by whom that poem has been admired.—Lyrical compositions of Tasso, his canzoni and sonnets.—His prose writings.—Conclusion. - 340

APPENDIX.

No. XX.—Canzone to the Metauro. - - - 381
No. XXI.—Discourse of Tasso to the Duke of Urbino. - - 383
No. XXII.—Analysis of a Letter of Tasso to Scipio Gonzaga, and of a Discourse by that poet, on the various accidents of his Life. - - 396
No. XXIII.—Sonnets to the Cats of St Anne's Hospital. - - 407
No. XXIV.—Poetical supplications of Tasso to the Family of Este. 408
No. XXV.—Of James Crichton. - - - 413
No. XXVII.—Letter of condolence from Guarini, to the Duchess of Urbino, on the death of her sister Leonora of Este. - - 451
No. XXVIII.—Additional remarks on the confinement of Tasso. - 452
No. XXIX.—Chaunt of the verses of Tasso, by the Gondoliers of Venice. 455
No. XXXII.—Supplication of Tasso to the Empress. - - 458
No. XXXV.—Of the probability that the conversation of Manso, and the example of Tasso, inspired Milton with the design of writing an epic poem. - - - - - - 459
No. XXXVI.—Of the Gerusalemme Conquistata. - - 477

LIFE

OF

TORQUATO TASSO.

CHAPTER XIII.

Tasso flies from Ferrara, and visits his sister in the habit of a shepherd.—Resides at Sorrento.—Wishes to return to the court of Alphonso.—Departs to Rome.—Solicits to be received at Ferrara, and returns thither.—Becomes discontented, and again leaves that city.—Visits Mantua—Padua—Venice—And Urbino.—His temporary happiness there, and final dissatisfaction.—Departs to Turin.

A. D. 1577 — 1578.
AET. 33 — 34.

In the preceding chapters, I have been employed in recording events the most flattering and humiliating to man; the composition of a work, the most perfect of its kind, and the disease and decay of that mind by which it was created.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1577. Aet. 33.

In beholding this contrast, one feels a sentiment similar to that which desolates the soul, when we mourn over the tomb of a beauty whom we once admired. We array her in our fancy in all her former loveliness; and we wonder, like Petrarch, that the auburn ringlets, that the lightnings of the angel smile which was wont to form a paradise on earth, that these should now be nothing but a little dull and mouldering dust.

> The crisping locks of pure, refulgent gold,
> And all the lightning of the angel smile,
> Which chang'd to paradise this earth a while,
> Are now but dust, insensible, and cold. *

The influence of very hot weather is, as I have remarked, very powerful on a mind predisposed to derangement; and probably it was partly owing to this, that Tasso burst forth into a paroxysm on the seventeenth of June. For several weeks, the violence of the fit seems to have continued; and, as he believed that his life was no longer safe at Ferrara, he resolved to provide for his security by flight. This took place about the twentieth of July, 1577. As he dreaded pursuit, he selected the most lonely and unfrequented paths; avoided the highways and cities; and as he was destitute of

Tasso flies from Ferrara.

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* Le crespe chiome d'or puro lucente,
E'l lampeggiar del' angelico riso,
Che solean far' in terra un Paradiso,
Poca polvere son, che nulla sente.

Petrarca, *Son.* 24. II. Parte.

money, must have suffered very great hardships. In this state of desolation and imagined hostility, he recollected that he had a sister, and believed, that, in the tenderness of female friendship, and charities of so near a relative, he would find that sympathy which had been universally denied him. Of this lady, we had occasion to speak in the first volume of this history; and we left her married to Marzio Sersale, a gentleman of Sorrento. Nineteen years have elapsed since that period; the young and beautiful Cornelia is become the mother of a family, and continued to live at Sorrento, having lost her husband. To the kingdom of Naples, therefore, Tasso now turned himself, and entered it on the side of Abruzzo; having first, for greater security, changed cloaths with a poor shepherd, in whose hut he had one evening found a shelter. The Marquis of Villa describes, in the following manner, the meeting of our poet with his sister; of which, he says, he learned the principal circumstances from Antonino Sersale, her eldest son. The whole is characteristic of that suspicious frame of mind, in which the unhappy wanderer then was; and, besides, the most romantic of those circumstances, his disguise in the habit of a shepherd, is corroborated by Tasso himself, who mentions it in one of his letters. * "Having entered," says Manso, "into the city, and into the house of his sister, he found her alone with her ser-

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1577. Aet. 33.

Visits his sister in the habit of a shepherd.

* Non so (says he in writing to his sister,) se fra tante disperazioni debba sperare, che voi siate viva, acciò mi raccogliate un'altra volta in abito di Pastore; perchè in altro non posso venire agevolmente a vedervi. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 139.

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1577. Aet. 33.

vants, for she was now a widow, and her two sons were at that time not in the house. Being introduced, he feigned himself a messenger, and delivered her some letters, which he said were from her brother. These expressed, that Torquato was in the most imminent risk of his life, unless she succoured him with sisterly love, by procuring him some letters of protection of which he had need; and he referred her to the messenger for particulars. Terrified and afflicted with this sad intelligence, she desired, as soon as she was somewhat recovered, to hear the detail. Torquato exaggerated his fabled danger, and recounted a very probable story, in language so pathetic, that his sister fainted with excess of grief. Being now certain of her love, and accusing himself for causing her to suffer so much anguish, he began first to comfort her, and at last discovered himself; by degrees, however, and in such a manner as not to expose her to a new relapse. When Cornelia was at last tranquil, and had heard more fully from her brother the cause of his coming in such a disguise, she determined, for his satisfaction, to keep him incognito, except to her children, and to a few relations. To others it was pretended, that a cousin from Bergamo had come to Naples on some business, and had taken that opportunity of visiting her at Sorrento." *

The reason assigned by the biographers of Tasso for this tale of fiction to his sister is, the fear of overwhelming her

* *Vita di T. Tasso*, p. 87. et. seq.

with joy at this unexpected meeting, after an absence of twenty-three years. For my own part, I am inclined to attribute it to his doubt of a kind reception in his present indigent condition. Cornelia had been totally insulated from her family; she had been influenced by her uncles, who were at bitter variance with Bernardo; and her father had consequently been not quite satisfied with her conduct to himself and to her brother.* It was high spirited, therefore, in Tasso not to discover himself in his present circumstances, till he was assured of her affection; and, without doubt, had her sensibility been less, he would have directed his steps to a more hospitable abode.

Sorrento.

The natural beauties of Sorrento have been already described by Bernardo Tasso, in the first chapter of this work. Such was the power of their influence on the senses and the imagination, that they seem to have communicated a sort of poetical afflatus to whoever endeavoured to delineate them. "Being now in a state of security, (says Manso,) Torquato remained with his sister the remainder of the summer. Of his satisfaction one may judge from his enjoying, as it were, a home, a comfort which he had never before had, except at a period when he could not appreciate it; and from the beauty and variety of that enchanting country. Delightful in every season, and especially to the muses, it is peculiarly happy and profuse of solace, at a time when extreme

* Vol. I. p. 58. of this work.

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1577.
Aet. 33.

heat renders the regions around it intolerable. This is occasioned by the verdure of the leaves, the shade of the trees, the continual whispering of the breezes, and by the freshness of the limpid streams, which murmur amidst the hills, and loiter in the vales. Add to these the fertility of the spacious plains, the serenity of the air, the tranquillity of the sea, the birds, the fishes, and delightful fruits, which seem to contend with each other in abundance and variety. And, certainly, when one sees and considers the union of so many beauties, it would seem, both to the eye and to the understanding, to be a vast and wonderful garden, designed with the utmost skill of nature, and cultivated with all the diligence of art. In his walks amidst these delightful places, the two nephews of Tasso, Antonino and Alexander Sersale, were his constant companions; both of which gentlemen gave, from their youth, signal proofs of that excellence of character, and of those graceful manners, which render them at present so dear to every one."

To the comforts which are here detailed by Manso, with such warmth of colouring, may be added the affectionate care of a sister to a brother at once so renowned and helpless. We may add, too, his convalescence, the raptures of which, in his own case, are described in the following striking manner by Cowper, in an epistle to a female relation, who had visited him during a fit of mental alienation. "Since the visit (says he) you were so kind to pay me in the Temple, what have I not suffered! and since it has pleased God to

restore me to the use of reason, what have I not enjoyed! You know, by experience, how pleasant it is to feel the first approaches of health after a fever; but, oh! the fever of the brain---to feel the quenching of that fire, is indeed a blessing which I think it impossible to receive without the most consummate gratitude." * The happiness, or at least the consolation, which Torquato now enjoyed, seems to have made a strong impression upon his mind; and ten years afterward he writes to his sister, that he wished he could again visit her, to respire his native air, to find comfort in her society, and to refresh his thoughts amidst those sublime and beautiful scenes which nature here has lavished with so unsparing a hand. †

Unfortunately Cornelia was not satisfied with this moral treatment, (which, in a disease caused in general by intense mental affections, is naturally the most efficacious,) but was prompted by her tenderness to resort to the aid of physicians. They, according to the medical treatment of melancholy adopted from the practice of the ancients, made use of strong cathartics; and continued assiduously to weaken the debilitated constitution of the poet. Even had he recovered from his distemper, the probability was, that he would never have recovered of the remedies. The prescription which Tasso principally abominated, was salt-water; his aversion to which was so great, that the use of this horrid

* Hayley, *Life of Cowper*, I. p. 47, 8vo. † *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 140.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1577. Aet. 33.

beverage was not insisted on.* In a short time the novelty of the situation of our poet at Sorrento was over, and he began to tire; separated as he was from his papers, his friends, and his enemies. Accustomed at Ferrara to an intensity of life, nothing could be more insipid than perambulating with two boys; nor, to an active mind, can the scenery of nature afford a very delicious and continued pleasure. At some periods, indeed, and with certain accidents, their impression may be exquisite; but what I speak of, is their habitual effect, their every-day influence on a person, (unless a lover near the mistress of his heart,) who lives in the midst of them. Such a person, if his mind be active, will meet little pleasure in groves and streams; he will find that lying in the shade is a solace less exquisite than poets have represented it, and often, in his hours of languor, will lament, with the unhappy Shenstone, the insipidity of the gratifica-

Tasso tires of Sorrento.

* In a letter to his sister, 14th February, 1581, he says, " Sonò pronto a prendere ogni medicamento, purchè non sia quello dell' acqua; il quale ella sa, ch'io ricusai ancora in casa sua, e che ella con molta amorevolezza si contentò che Io il ricusassi." " In a disease, (says a writer in the London Medical Review, June, 1809,) in a disease in which the mind seems to be principally and primarily affected, and the body secondarily and less considerably, it is strange that we should not employ our first and chief attention to ascertain the condition of the patient's understanding, and to contrive some mode of management, some form of tuition, some means which shall act directly on the part which is affected, and reduce it to the healthy action: on the contrary, we direct almost our whole attention to the symptoms which affect the body, and almost all the remedies which have been usually employed, are such as can act on the mind only through the medium of the body, just as if absurd notions were to be removed, hurried ideas to be made slow, enfeebled volition to be invigorated, adhesion of the attention to a few ideas to be overcome by bleeding, blistering, and purging."

tion which is derived from the still recurring series of rural appearances:—

> " Tedious again to curse the drizzling day,
> Again to trace the wintry tracts of snow;
> Or, sooth'd by vernal airs, again survey
> The self-same hawthorns bud, and cowslips blow."

Another circumstance, which has been overlooked by all the biographers of Tasso, is, that his sister seems to have been far from opulent; at least, this I think is deducible from a passage of a letter which I have formerly quoted.* As she was a widow, with, perhaps, a numerous family, it must have been extremely painful to her brother to add to her poverty.† He now, therefore, began, as usual, to torment himself; was alarmed lest he should, by his flight, have irrecoverably lost the good opinion of Alphonso, and wrote to that prince, and to his sisters, entreating to be restored to his former favour. From the Duke of Ferrara, or the Duchess of Urbino, Tasso had not the honour of an answer; and the letter of Leonora was cool, and gave him little hopes of success.‡ The representations of others to whom he wrote fill-

* Vol. I. p. 256. " Vedrà parimente da una lettera scrittami da mia sorella la sua necessità, e l'obbligo, ch'io ho di soccorrerla: e come in tanta mia povertà sono stato costretto a darle alcuno ajuto."—*Oper.* vol. X. p. 134.

† Manso only mentions the two sons of Cornelia; but she had also some daughters, one of whom was named Anne. These must have been of a good stature; for, in a letter to his sister, Torquato jocularly says, " Pregate Dio per me e baciate le gigantesse."

‡ *Opere.* vol. IX. p. 188. " Dal Sig. Duca, e dalla Sig. Duchessa vostra moglie, Io

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1577. Aet. 33.

ed him with despair, so that he resolved, he says, to return of his own accord, and, with a generosity of which there are few examples, to resign his life to the hands of the duke.

Departs to Rome.

Accordingly, after various obstacles, and the sufferings of a dangerous sickness, he departed to Rome in the month of November. In order to shew the confidence he entertained in the magnanimity of Alphonso, he alighted at the house of his agent, Julius Masetto, a man of a very respectable character, and afterwards bishop of Reggio. This gentleman, who knew the great merit of our poet, received him with kindness, and, in concert with Camillo Gualengo, ambassador of the duke, signified his arrival to that prince. They mentioned that he was not yet quite recovered; that he was extremely anxious to obtain the pardon, and to be restored to the favour, of his highness; that for this purpose he had repaired to the house, and put himself under the protection of that prince's ministers; and that he there waited with impatience his benignant commands.

To Cardinal Albano, and to Scipio Gonzaga, it did not seem expedient that Tasso should return to Ferrara, even though he should be again invited. They feared that, owing to his suspicious temper, and the crowd of enemies which he had, or believed he had in that city, it would be impossible for him to find quiet, or enjoy the least shade of felicity; and they coun-

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non impetrai mai risposta. Da Madama Leonora l'ebbi tale, che compresi, che non poteva favorirmi.—*Lettera al Duca d'Urbino.*

selled him, therefore, to content himself with being assured by the duke of his pardon, and with the restitution of the effects and writings left at Ferrara. It would seem that Torquato listened to their affectionate advice, from the following letter of Cardinal Albano to Alphonso, printed, like many of those documents, for the first time in the work of Serassi:

CHAP. XIII
A. D. 1577 Aet. 33.

"To the Signor Duke of Ferrara.

"Most serene and worshipful Lord!

"Your highness is extremely sensible that much compassion is due to Sig. Torquato Tasso, he being of that rare and happy genius which the world well knows. And (as it appears to him that his life is insecure, unless your highness assures him that you have laid aside the anger conceived against him, and receive him under your protection) I entreat, with all affection, that you will, on this occasion, afford your efficacious aid, in the manner that Sig. Scipio Gonzaga shall propose. That is, that your highness will order a patent to be made out, in which it shall be signified, that, both on account of his justification from the calumnies raised against him, and from your own clemency and benignity, a pardon is given him; and that he is received into favour, and shall be protected against all his enemies. I also entreat your highness, that you would cause restitution to be made of his goods, and especially of his writings, he ha-

CHAP. XIII. A. D. 1577. Aet. 33.

ving a design to finish his work, as himself has signified to the Duchess of Urbino. By granting this favour, which I earnestly entreat in behalf of a person so meritorious, and who is very dear to me, both from the respect of country and other motives, your highness will infinitely oblige me, and I shall take every opportunity of testifying my gratitude. To conclude, I pray for every prosperity to your highness, and kiss your hands.

Of your most serene highness,
The most affectionate servant,
The CARDINAL ALBANO.

From Rome, the 30th of November, 1577."

With respect to the security which was required for the tranquillity of Tasso, it is probable that the duke gave a direct answer to Scipio Gonzaga, by whom it was to be particularly requested. At least he says almost nothing of this in a letter to Cardinal Albano, in answer to the above; but confines himself principally to speak of the writings. Of this letter the following is a translation:

" Most illustrious and most reverend Sir,

" I delayed answering the letter which, some time since, you wrote me concerning Tasso, as I wished at the same time to send you his writings. A very serious indisposition of my sister, the Duchess of Urbino, has prevented a full collection of these, as several of them are in the hands of her

excellency; however, we are now gleaning them, and they shall soon be fully gathered. This, most illustrious sir, I have wished you to know, and also that the sister of the said Tasso having written to the lady duchess and to myself, but more earnestly to her excellency, about those writings, they shall be put, as soon as possible, either into the hands of your lordship, or into those of Tasso himself. In addition to this, care will be taken to aid him no less by words, than has hitherto been done by deeds; and this the more, as it is so affectionately recommended to me by your lordship, of whom I kiss the hand; and at the same time pray to God, that you may meet with all felicity.

From Ferrara, the 13th of January, 1578.

Most illustrious sir, your servant,

The DUKE of FERRARA."

These writings, however, were not sent, probably from fear that they might be destroyed in the present unhappy state of the author; or from a natural anxiety lest they might be altered, and those complimentary verses be cancelled, which immortalized whom they sung. Whether from uneasiness on this account, from natural restlessness, from fears about subsistence, from the power of habit, or from some motive which remains unknown, Tasso became desirous of returning to Ferrara. The Marquis of Villa hints, that he was stimulated to this by the letters of the Princess Leonora; an assertion, for which, says Serassi, I

Wishes to return to Ferrara.

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

have not discovered a vestige of proof, either in the writings of Torquato, or in those of any other. If these letters, however, ever existed, they were of a kind not to remain on record; and a still more forcible argument may be derived from the age of the lady, who was now forty-one, and the state of her admirer, who was disordered in his mind. Neither of these circumstances seems much calculated to preserve, or render passion vigorous; and if love can thrive in such a soil and climate, it is a still more hardy plant than observation or reasoning had led me to suppose.

To the petition of Torquato, that he might return to Ferrara, the duke yielded his consent; and expresses himself thus, in a dispatch to his ministers at Rome, of the date of the twenty-second of March, 1578. "With regard to Tasso, concerning whom you write, my will is that you shall declare to him freely, that, if he intends to return here to us, we are contented to receive him. It will be necessary, however, for him, in the first place, to be made sensible that he is full of melancholy humour; and those suspicions of malice and persecution, which he says he has met with here, have no other origin but the said humour. Among the many other proofs of which, this is one, that he imagines I have an intention of putting him to death, though I have always caressed and looked upon him favourably, and though he may readily believe, that, if ever I had such a fancy, the execution of it would have been easy. For these reasons, if he wishes to come, he must firmly resolve, and by all means

consent to be tranquil, and to allow the humour to be cured by the physicians. With regard to his suspicions, and using expressions such as he has done in time past, I will not blame him; only when here, if he does not allow himself to be cured, we shall cause him suddenly to be expelled from our states, with a charge never to return. What has been said is sufficient, if he determines to come here; if not, we shall give orders that some of his goods, which are in the hands of Coccapani, shall be returned, and to him he may write."

From this letter, Serassi argues that Alphonso had heard nothing of the supposed loves of Torquato and Leonora; as it shews that he was by no means indignant at that poet. He considers also as ridiculous, a story told by Muratori, which seems to have been diffused at a very early period. One day (according to this story,) Tasso being at court in company with Alphonso and his sisters, some question was put to the poet by the princess Leonora; and as he was sitting very near her, his face happened to approach hers so closely, that the attraction overcame his recollection, and he gave her an embrace. Upon this Alphonso, turning to his courtiers, said, "See the melancholy condition of a man so great, who to such a degree is deprived of reason," and caused him to be confined as a lunatic.* Some writers have affirmed, that

* Muratori *Lettera ad* Apostolo Zeno *in Opere di* Tasso, vol. X. p. 240. This story is pleasantly alluded to in a comedy by Scipio Errico, entitled *Le Rivolte di Parnasso*, first printed at Messina, 1625, in 12mo. In act iii. scene 3, the author represents

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

Tasso feigned madness, in order to escape the dreadful punishment which the duke, after the discovery of his presumptuous passion, was preparing for him. * Never was a hypothesis more void of foundation. Its origin was owing to the supposition that mental alienation is incompatible with that degree of judgment which appears in several works of Tasso written during his confinement. The disease of this poet was in general not mania, but melancholia, a modification of insanity which leaves to reason its full empire; except perhaps upon a single subject, or at periods when attended with delirium. "The faculties of reflexion and reasoning, (says Pinel,) are visibly impaired or destroyed, in the greatest number of cases of derangement. But I have seen some, where either, or both, of those faculties have retained all their energy; or have recovered themselves speedily, upon an object presenting itself, calculated to attract and to fix the attention. I engaged a person of this class, naturally of excellent parts, to write a letter for me, at a time when he was maintaining very absurd and ridiculous positions. This letter, which I have still by me, is full of good reasoning and good sense." Cowper, in the midst of the deepest mental depression, laboured at his translation of Homer; producing sometimes sixty new lines in a day. This too was at a time

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Tasso as introduced to Calliope, by Cesar Caporali. *Cap.* Signor Torquato accostatevi *Tass.* Eccomi pronto al dolce impero di Signora si grande. *Cap.* Lontano Fratello, tu hai certa virtù, che subito corri a baciare.

* Quadrio *Storia d'ogni Poesia*, vol. II. page 266.

when he seemed totally deaf to the most honourable praise, and insensible to the soothing of the warmest friendship. "He steadily (says Mr Hayley) pursued and finished the revisal and correction of his *Homer*, during a long period of bodily and mental sufferings; when his troubled mind recoiled from all intercourse with his most intimate friends, and laboured under a morbid abhorrence of all cheerful exertion."*

It is to be regretted, that the kiss of Tasso given to Leonora rests upon vague tradition, and cannot be authenticated. For though this would by no means establish his passion for that princess, and far less prove that it was the source of his mental disorder, it would account for the common story of their love. That I should have been disposed to credit this tale of mutual passion will be readily believed, when it is considered how much interest and embellishment it would have added to this work. In fact, it appears to me sometimes, that a tradition so early and so universal as that of the loves of Torquato and Leonora, could not have existed without some foundation; and a certain satisfaction is felt at beholding Mind destroying the barriers which rank has erected, and the cold indifference of grandeur melting away before the united beams of genius and of love.

To return to the letter of the Duke of Ferrara; it is evident from it, that he considered Tasso's accusations of perse-

* *Life of Cowper*, iv. page 175.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

cution as altogether groundless. That they were greatly exaggerated is certain; but the false keys, and the endeavours to render suspected his best friends, are circumstances upon which one would think it is scarcely possible to be deceived. I have already indeed shown grounds upon which it is natural to conclude that our poet was persecuted at the court of Ferrara, where to live with comfort was almost impossible. In such a situation there was much scope for the operation of petty competition and of private malignity. In addition to the collusion of interests, rivalship was excited and increased by the personal presence of the opponent, and continual comparison of one with another. Tasso, too, had an uncommon and imprudent frankness; nor is it improbable that, with a soul naturally dignified and noble, he was too great not to be simple; and, in the universal masquerade of the court, neglected to veil the superiority of his genius, by that false modesty, or that low intrigue, which would have rendered it less offensive.*

* Tasso often mentions in his letters, his uncommon openness of character, and complains of the evils which it had occasioned him. "Chi nella conversazione è più aperto, o più libero, o più anco inconsiderato di me? Cosi non foss'io stato tale; che in si fatta infelicità non sarei caduto. Non sono nell'animo mio, nè furon mai molte ritirate, nè molti nascondimenti: ma così l'ira, come l'amore, e così la buona, come la mala soddisfazione mi si legge nella fronte, e nella lingua si manifesta." *Opere*, vol. X. p. 378. A most helpless character this in an Italian court, of which I have already given the picture by Guarini, (vol. I. p. 344,) and which appears with no greater charms in a passage of the *Adone*, where Marino relates the incidents of his own life.

CHAP. XIII.

A.D. 1578. Aet. 34.

Our poet, however, was greatly delighted with the permission of returning to Ferrara, and easily consented to all the conditions imposed on him. This he did the more readily, as he had lately suffered a severe malady, which confined him to the house a great part of the few months during which he remained at Rome. He departed from that city on horseback, in the company of the ambassador Gualengo, * who was on his return to Ferrara, where Tasso was received with courtesy and kindness. His expectations were now raised to a very high pitch, and his principal enemy, the philosopher of the court, seemed, (if we may believe our poet,) so dejected, that he was induced to pity and console him. This task was, however, of no long continuance; for, whether Tasso's hopes were too vigorous, or the frequency and fer-

Tasso arrives at Ferrara.

Vidi la corte, e nela corte Io vidi
Promesse lunghe, e guiderdoni avari,
Favori ingiusti, e patrocinii infidi,
Speranze dolci, e pentimenti amari,
Sorrisi traditor, vezzi homicidi,
Et acquisti dubbiosi, e danni chiari,
E voti vani, & Idoli bugiardi,
Onde il male è securo, e'l ben vien tardi.

Canto ix. stanza 76.

* In a letter to Maurice Cataneo, dated Turin, first December, 1578, Tasso says, "Rimango con infinito obbligo, che m'abbia impetrato il perdono da gl' Illustrissimi Signori Cardinali d' Este, e de' Medici, come chè Io non sappia, in che aver mai offeso Monsignor Illustris. d' Este, se non forse in partirmi di casa sua, e da Roma, senza fargli riverenza. Ma il primo errore nacque per soverchio d'umore; nell' altro Io non ebbi colpa alcuna, trovandomi in potere altrui. Il Sig. Cardinale de' Medici avrebbe forse maggior occasione di sdegno verso di me; onde ch'egli l'abbià deposto, me rimango con maggior obbligo a Monsignor Illust."—*Oper.* vol. X. p. 255.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

vour of his attentions were troublesome to the duke, he soon began to imagine himself slighted, and (as repose was recommended to him) that small account was made of him and of his writings. He was tormented with the idea that Alphonso wished him, as if his genius were now fled, to lead an idle and effeminate life; "to become," he says, "a fugitive from Parnassus into the gardens of Epicurus." * He complained that his compositions were withheld from him, and that he was not allowed to polish and complete them; he demanded frequently an audience of the Duke, of the Duchess of Urbino, and of Leonora, for the purpose of obtaining restitution; but admission was denied him, and often, he tells us, disrespectfully. Repulsed in this manner, he often burst forth into violent expressions; wished he had served in preference some prince who was an enemy of Alphonso; and at last, with despair in his heart, resolved again to fly from Ferrara. Of all these circumstances we have a full account in a long and interesting letter, written, soon after this period, by Tasso to the Duke of Urbino. It is probable that he offended Alphonso by refusing all sorts of medicine; and it appears, also, from the letter just mentioned, that he had laid aside, for some time, his usually temperate habits. "Without regard," says he, "for my health or life, I voluntarily aggravated my evil by the disorders of immoderate intemperance; so that death was almost the consequence." † This, he says, he did, not from inclination, for he abhorred

* *Oper.* vol. VIII. p. 260; IX. p. 193.

† *Ibid,* vol. IX. p. 188.

intemperance, even while he practised it, but for the following reasons, which would be ludicrous, did the condition of our bard not render them affecting: "My first object," says he, "was to gain the favour of the duke; my second was to accustom myself to despise health and pleasure, recollecting that it was the opinion of some of the best philosophers, that vigorous health is dangerous to virtue, as it assists the body to tyrannize over the mind. Besides the practice, not only of some nations which existed or exist, but even of the ancient Greek legislators and philosophers, who planned republics, establishes drunkenness as on some occasions useful. I recollected that, not only Alcibiades, who, with the Spartans, was a model of continence and rigour, was, among the Asiatics and Thracians, delicate and a drinker, but that even Socrates, the severest moral master of antiquity, not only celebrated banquets in a gladsome manner, but, in contests of drinking, excelled all the topers of his time. . . I collected, too, from many probable conjectures, or rather most certain proofs, that this contempt of my health was agreeable to the duke; not only because I, who had before now lived delicately, accustomed myself to suffering, but that also I might amend, by notable confidence, the error of my former diffidence." *

* *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 189; see too vol. VII. p. 102. Tasso had always the example of some ancient philosopher to quote as an apology for any thing he did; and Socrates seems to have been his toper. "Io sono stato (says he in a letter to Ascanio Mori) questa notte

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

With a person whose imagination was thus always creating new phantasies, and whose reason was ever ready to support them, it was scarcely possible to act so as not to render him dissatisfied. This was the more difficult, as, like Rousseau, he now seems to have believed, that he either did, or ought, to occupy the attention of all mankind; and that nothing else ought to be thought of, or attended to. Besides, neither the *Aminta* nor the *Jerusalem* were yet published; the reputation of their author was, consequently, vague and unestablished; nor did he yet seem worthy of that universal interest which his wonderful genius was calculated to awake. His friends finding it impossible either to calm his disquiet, or soothe his melancholy, were at last vexed with his caprices, and fatigued with his complaints. It was difficult for them to suppose, that something of perverseness did not enter into his conduct, and that he, who reasoned so acutely, could be, on certain common subjects, so deaf to reason. Thus they were glad, at least, to escape his importunity; and as his natural sensibility to neglect was

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molto male; e non sò s'io me debba attribuir la cagione al vino, o al cibo, o pur all' aver troppo bevuto; la qual cosa Io soglio far rare volte, e trapassar l'ordinario di poco, per discacciar la malinconia: ma non mi è venuto fatto questa notte. Per l'avvenire sarò più temperato, e cercherò che la temperanza mi faccia ben disposto al' bere, coll'esempio di Socrate. Ma V. S. dirà, che Io non son buon cortigiano; e Io gliele concedo volentieri; sì veramente, che altrui mi conceda, che Io possa filosofare. Mi dolgo della morte del Sig. Andrea, e accetto l'abito da duolo, non dico per consolazione del dolore, perchè ella sarebbe piccola; ma per segno della mia servitù. Ed a V. S. bacio la mano, Di camera."—*Oper.* vol. IX. p. 97.

quickened to an uncommon degree by a secret consciousness of his situation, this gave birth to new complaints, and justified to himself his reproaches.

The principal hardship which Tasso met with during this short residence at Ferrara, was the retention of his writings; a proceeding which certainly appears to be quite unjustifiable. That it was a harsh one cannot be denied; yet it seems to have been adopted from the fear that his poem might be destroyed; disordered as he was in his mind, and disgusted with it on account of the censures of his critics, and the torments it had occasioned. Again, therefore, Tasso left Ferrara, and travelled on foot to Mantua. Here his father, as we have seen, found an asylum in his misfortunes; and the patron of Bernardo was still alive. The daughter of that prince, however, was on the point of being married to the Duke of Ferrara, and him, perhaps, he was unwilling to displease by listening to the complaints and accusations of the illustrious fugitive. Torquato, indeed, met with some attention from the young Prince Vincenzo; but, on the whole, found himself uneasy, principally, it would seem, from his suspicions that he was considered as insane.* "I went," says he "to Mantua, where I was treated with the same harsh proceedings that had been used against me at

Leaves Ferrara, and goes to Mantua.

* Andai a Mantoua, ove fu proceduto meco co'medesimi termini, co'quali si procedeva in Ferrara; salvo che dal Sereniss. Principe giovinetto d'età, e di costumi eroichi di quei favori, che alla sua tenera età era conceduto di farmi, fui consolato graziosamente.—*Oper.* vol. IX. p. 194.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

Ferrara, except, indeed, by the most serene prince, a youth in years, but of heroic manners, who consoled me graciously with such favours as it was permitted to his tender age to confer." As Tasso was in want of money, he was recommended to one Peter Giovanni, or Peter John, to whom he sold a valuable ruby, a present from the Duchess of Urbino, and an elegant collar, which, at that time, it was fashionable to wear. Peter, it would seem, understood his business, as Tasso complains that he got for his ring not quite one-third of its value, and that the collar was sold for four scudi less than the weight of the gold. Furnished with this money, in all amounting to fifty-two scudi, our poet visited Padua and Venice, where he found, he says, all hearts equally hardened. That he had still friends, however, is evident from the following letter of Maffeo Veniero, addressed to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, Francis de Medici, and dated at Venice, the twelfth of July, 1578:

Visits Padua and Venice.

" Tasso is here, disturbed in mind; and, although it cannot be said that his intellect is quite sound, yet the symptoms which he discovers are rather those of melancholy than of madness. Of his humours the principal is his desire to be in the service of your highness, and he requests only a small provision, on which he may live in a retired and simple manner. The other is his wish that the Duke of Ferrara would restore him his book, of which he has not a copy. On these two subjects he almost always raves; but his principal anxiety is not about his book, as he trusts he shall

write a better one in three years; and truly I believe it, as his poetical faculty is by no means injured. He has begun a most lofty canzone upon the birth of the most serene prince; and I shall endeavour to make him finish it. As to his other wish, (the service of your highness,) in which he constantly persists, he is oppressed with a distrust of shelter at your court; he wished, however, to go thither, but I have detained him till I might know your will. I beseech you, if it be favourable, that you will deign to write a few words, that I may afford consolation to this unfortunate genius. I have been moved by extreme pity to undertake this office with your highness, as the war of thoughts in the mind of this unhappy person might cease with the dread of penury; and, besides, I would wish him occupied with that muse whose labours he knows so well how to employ." *

Whether a favourable answer was not received from Florence, or our poet, as is more probable, changed his resolution without waiting its arrival, he now passed into the states of the Duke of Urbino. His person, and his misfortunes, were here well known; and he seems to have met with that sympathy, and, what he valued higher, with that respect, which was due to his virtues and to his genius. A short interval of delight was now afforded him; and, in a letter to the duke, he felicitates himself on the misfortunes which had conducted him to so sweet an asylum, and uses the expression of Themistocles, that he had been undone, if he had

Tasso seeks protection from the Duke of Urbino.

* Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 265.

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

not been ruined.* "If there be one of my actions, (writes Tasso in this epistle, which, as it forms a curious contrast with a discourse addressed by him, about the same time, to this prince, and which shall by and by be mentioned, I shall translate at length,) if there be one of my actions by which the report of my insanity, so malignantly spread abroad, may be thought to be confirmed, most assuredly it is the having, after my flight, directed my course to any other asylum than to the court of your highness; since, in every other place, I might have had apprehensions of meeting, if not with danger, at least with inconvenience and indignity. In what other place than this could I hope to find a more perfect knowledge of me; a reception more courteous; a patron more generous; a more efficacious pity of my misfortunes; or a more ready protection of my innocence? If, therefore, I neglected a sanctuary, as near and safe as it is commodious and agreeable; and that, too, for the purpose of seeking, in the midst of indigence, or at least with indecorum, an asylum which was distant and insecure, this, if not a symptom of folly, was at least a proof of inconsideration and imprudence. But, whereas other men, when they know that they have acted foolishly, are ashamed and penitent; to me, on the contrary, there result from my indiscretion satisfaction and comfort: since, having reached, not where I wished, but where I ought to have come, and having gained a harbour, while I believed that I was still tossing in

Letter to that prince.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 185.

the unfathomable ocean, I learn from this, in the clearest manner, that my course has been guided by the providence of God. To me also it ought to be more dear, to have reached this harbour by Divine than by human foresight, by how much more infallibly the providence of God conducts events to the happy issue which it has designed. True it is, that if I had come hither with the hope of being received under the protection of your excellency, I ought to rejoice, seeing that effects would have been so conformable to my expectation, and finding courtesy in your excellency adequate to my desires; but higher, doubtless, ought to be my gladness, when I perceive that you have, not only anticipated, but surpassed my wishes; that you have, as it were, in the same instant awakened and fulfilled my hopes; and I say *fulfilled*, since, by your courteous demonstrations of affection and of pity towards me, and on your promise given me, that you will take me under your protection, I found, not merely the hope, but the certainty, of safety, of quiet, and of honour. It is sufficient that you have promised, and what more can I require. For, indeed, did I doubt or hope with such languid expectations as are formed of things uncertain, I should wrong the benignity, the providence, the authority, or zeal of your excellency; and I would demonstrate myself unworthy, not only of what you mean to do, but of what you have already done for me. Be assured, therefore, that I live most secure under your protection; and not merely secure but happy, since it afflicts me, not so much to have been so cruelly and unjustly overwhelmed by fortune, as it delights

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

me to have been raised by the hands of your excellency. And, indeed, if there was no path but the hard and rugged one of persecution, which could have conducted me toward you, and placed me under the shade of your favour, it pleases me to have reached you even by this, and I consider those sorrows, not only as supportable, but as happy, which have made me yours; a thing which I desired even in my most prosperous fortune. Hence I dare to use those famous words of Themistocles, that he had been undone if he had not been ruined. I shall omit, as now superfluous, the long and piteous story of my woes, since even the little which your excellency has heard of my misfortunes, has sufficed to move your magnanimous heart to yield me succour; nor shall I seek to excite in your soul any additional pity to what has spontaneously awakened. I congratulate myself, indeed, that, in your noble and courteous conduct, my diligence has had no part, but that it is the voluntary produce of your humane and lofty mind. I should willingly, however, thank your excellency, both for what you have done, and are about to do, for my benefit, if I could invent expressions adequate to my emotions. But what can I, or ought I, to say? I neither can nor ought to use to you terms such as servants use to their masters, or persons benefited to their benefactors, or persons obliged to those to whom they are under obligation, since, as my misery was without parallel, and without example, so it would be necessary for me to find new expressions to signify my gratitude to your excellency, who delivers me from them. I shall say, then, that

since, by your goodness, I rise from a state so debased and wretched; since I have undergone a resurrection, as it were, into the fame and opinion of men to which I was wholly dead, it seems to me that I have received from you a new life. Thus I shall acknowledge your excellency, not only as a lord and benefactor to whom my obligations are extreme, but (if I may be permitted to say so,) in some degree as a creator; nor would it be enough for me to say, that I am your most devoted servant, who had received from you many benefits, unless I added that I am likewise your creature. Such, then, I shall make profession of being, and such I entreat you to deem me in future, and to induce others to deem me; and I beseech you to take right of me and of my free-will, of which I grant you the unreserved sovereignty. And with this I humbly kiss your hand, assuring your excellency, that the words which I have now written upon paper, were previously inscribed in lasting characters upon my heart."

No one, who was unacquainted with the real condition of Tasso, and who received such a letter as this, could have believed that he was not in his perfect mind; and it was naturally conjectured by such persons, that the report of his insanity was merely a pretext for confining and maltreating him. His verse, however, was still more eloquent than his prose. One of the most beautiful of the compositions of this poet, is an unfinished canzone, written a little before this time, in which he recounts the misfortunes which had happened to him from his birth; implores the protection of the Duke of Urbino, and (alluding to the arms of the family,)

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

entreats that he would receive him under the hospitable shade of his mighty oak. The duke was then at Castel Durante, on the banks of the classical Metaurus; and the canzone is addressed to that stream, where the Genius of Rome finally prevailed, in the terrible struggle with her ill-fated rival.*

His temporary happiness.

This beautiful recital of woes terminates with the death of his father; and the kind reception which Tasso met with from the Duke of Urbino was probably what hindered him to absolve the number.† The blooming verdure of his hopes is painted in the following manner, in a letter to his sister, who, hearing of his new flight from Ferrara, was in the utmost distress on his account. It is probable, however, that a desire of giving her comfort induced him to heighten the co-

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* Quid debeas, ô Roma, Neronibus!
Testis Metaurum Flumen, et Asdrubal
Devictus, et pulcher fugatis
Ille dies Latio tenebris;
Qui primus almâ risit adoreâ
Dirus per urbes Afer ut Italas
Ceu flamma per tedas, vel Eurus
Per Siculas equitavit undas.

Hor. lib. IV. ode 4.

† In this canzone are the verses formerly quoted, (vol. I. p. 31,) which are usually represented as addressed by Tasso to his mother, on his departure from Naples. The Cavalier Marino, speaking of it in one of his letters, (ed. 1673, in 12mo, p. 241,) says, that "per l'affetto e per cento bellezze poetiche è una delle più nobili canzoni, che uscirono da quella famosissima penna." It is to be found in vol. VI. p. 283 of Tasso's works; and, from its great merit, and the circumstances in which it was written, I have given it a place in the Appendix, (No. XX.)

louring. The letter is dated at Pesaro, on the 25th of September, 1578, and is in the following terms:— CHAP. XIII. A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

"Very magnificent Lady, and most dear Sister,

"About a week ago I received your letter, at a time when I could not answer it without leaving supper, nor, which was of more consequence, the company of some gentlemen, without incivility. I now acknowledge its receipt, and assure you, that it has been exceedingly dear to me. I will write to you not only frequently, but at great length, as I desire that you may be well informed of all my actions. They are such as they have always been; such, in short, as cannot fail of bringing the highest reputation to yourself and to me; and it is therefore suitable that you should know them, in order that you may undeceive those who think, or have thought, otherwise. Nor shall I only write to you, but I will endeavour to communicate all the writings which I shall compose on this subject; writings which shall demonstrate to the world that I am neither melancholy, nor mad, nor ignorant; and which shall make that wicked Ferrarese bite his lip, who has endeavoured, by so many falsehoods, to defame me. I have already begun to write, and will endeavour, by means of Sig. Scipio Gonzaga, to send you an oration, which I shall address to the Duke of Urbino; and which it would be extremely agreeable to me, that you would circulate through Naples.* From the Duke of Ferrara, I

Letter to his sister.

* This must have been the long letter, or discourse to the Duke of Urbino. *Opere*, vol. IX. 186, which, if actually distributed, could not fail of irritating, in a very high de-

CHAP. XIII.
A. D. 1578.
Aet. 34.

have departed for the justest causes; but know, that return is in my power; that he is exceedingly jealous at my departure; and that a gentleman has been here on purpose, that I might go back with him. I expected, however, to be invited, and at any rate, there is here a judicious young man, belonging to the duchess his sister, with whom I can return. Be assured likewise, that I shall always be well received by the cardinal his brother; and I believe also, that the grand duke and the cardinal of Medici would not reject me. Many are the lords who, after my departure, would have received me into their service; but I have not fixed on any, lest I might injure my condition. God is just, and I am not only inno-

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gree, the Duke of Ferrara. It represents him as haughty, disposed to listen to malignity, and a dupe to the arts of Tasso's enemies. With regard to the favourite, the philosopher Montecatino, he is attacked in the most violent, and, if he was indeed innocent, in the most unmerciful manner. "Il Duca, (says Tasso,) consentì, ch'altri s'usurpasse la possessione delle mie composizioni, già a lui dedicate acciochè non perfette, e non intere, e non viste uscissero in luce, e fussero censurate da quel Sofista (filosofo dire volli; sempre qui erro) che già molti anni sono andava apparecchiando arme contra me, e raccogliendo veleno, e infettandone mezza Italia; acciochè tutto da tutti fosse contra me in un tempo medesimo vomitato, e fussero censurate per lo più con quelle ragioni, delle quali parte avea preso dalle lettere mie, che con industria degna di filosofo era solito d'aprire, e serrare, falsificando forse col sigillo come già la filosofia avea falsificata; parte da un fanciullo, che l'avea prese da me, al quale il nuovo Censorino, o per dir meglio, il novello Socrate, con iscambievole gratitudine, insegnava in que' loro ragionamenti notturni di por cosi bene le virtù morali in esecuzione. Ma a me non manca, she rispondere loro." If these accusations had no other foundation than the diseased phantasy of the poet, the wonder is not great that Alphonso wished him to be confined; as, amidst occasional wildness of assertion or conjecture, his apologies are written with such ingenuity, and pathetic eloquence, as must strongly have influenced the public. As Tasso's discourse to the Duke of Urbino is very curious and important, I shall, notwithstanding its length, give it a place in the Appendix, (No. XXI.)

cent, but a person who has few peers, so that I have favourable hopes," &c. *

One of the circumstances which particularly tormented Tasso at this period, was the idea that people considered him as insane; † his suspicion was increased in an uncommon degree, and since (as I have remarked,) he was continually on the watch, it must have been extremely difficult to live with him, without offending him. He was soon dissatisfied with the Duke of Urbino; and imagined, as usual, that he was neglected, and that snares were laid for him. A little incident happened at this time, which, though very trivial in itself, yet, as it gave occasion to a very pretty madrigal, and shews the coaxing manner in which Tasso was wheedled to submit to remedies, may be mentioned. The physicians having advised the trial of a cautery, the bandages necessary for the dressing were prepared, and applied by the hands of Donna Lavinia della Rovere, afterwards Marchioness of Pescara. ‡ The state of mind in which our poet was at this period, is well exhibited in the following letter, written by him to the Count Domenico Albano, a son of Cardinal Albano, who had been married prior to his entrance into the church.

Tasso becomes dissatisfied with the Duke of Urbino.

* Serassi, *Vita del Tasso, p.* 268.

† *Opere,* vol. X. p. 257.

‡ The madrigal addressed to this lady on the occasion, begins, *Se da sì nobil mano,* and it is to be found *Opere,* vol. VI. p. 116.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

"Illustrious Lord, my most worshipful Patron,

"The great malignity of others, and my small degree of prudence, as well in being incapable of dissembling when injured, as in resenting with expressions too severe; in addition to which, the supreme confidence I had in my friends, and the little fidelity I have found in them, have reduced me to a most wretched condition; in which that evil, which formerly by itself seemed insupportable, appears now to be the least. Yet could I assure myself that no snares are laid for my life, or, if the Duke of Ferrara would either justify himself, or, neglecting this, if he would at least secure me from his anger in such a manner as to tranquillise me, my other cares would no longer afflict me, and I would hope to surmount them without the assistance of others. But, with regard to my security and safety, unless this be undertaken by a person of much authority, and who will effectually bestir himself in my behalf, it can by no means be sustained by the weakness of my force. I have placed my principal confidence in the authority and prudence of your most illustrious father; and in that affection which he has always shown me. And although I know that he cannot in any manner undertake my protection, without the displeasure of those who seek my ruin; though I imagine that endeavours will be used to hinder him from exerting his influence in my behalf; still, as I am secure of the affection he bears me, on account not only of community of country, but of friendship to my father, and natural regard, I cannot doubt, that he will employ himself in aiding me. I am

the more led to think that he will not neglect this compassionate and courteous office, as, for that purpose, no other motive is necessary but Christian pity and charity. My only desire is, that my enemies should content themselves with the iniquitous and grievous injuries they have made me suffer; and, since I desire not vengeance, it seems reasonable that they should not attempt to take away my life. But if, from any cause, that most illustrious lord should not embrace this holy and pious work, with that fervour which seems necessary to meet the difficulty of the business, I hope that the prayer and intercession of your lordship will excite and inflame him. I have recourse to a son that he may intercede with a father; I have recourse to a most affectionate and ancient patron, that he may supplicate for my safety one neither less ancient nor affectionate, so that in every view I must be heard. From Sig. Scipio Gonzaga you will have a more minute account of me, and I myself will give a more distinct narrative in the course of a few days. In the mean time, I wish the favour of an answer, which may be directed to me at Urbino, in the house of Sig. Frederic Bonaventura. Kiss, in my name, the hands of your most illustrious father in the humblest manner, and preserve me in his regard. 1578, from Urbino." *

As it appears from this letter, that Tasso had suspicions

* This letter, which was first published by Serassi, is without date, either of day or month, but that writer conjectures it to have been written about the beginning of October. *Vita del Tasso*, p. 271.

CHAP. XIII.

A. D. 1578. Act. 34.

of exertions being made to influence the Cardinal Albano against him, it is not wonderful that he began to mistrust the Duke of Urbino, who had still more intimate relations with the court of Ferrara. Fearing any longer therefore to remain in his states, our poet now determined to have recourse to the protection of the Duke of Savoy, and to seek with him an asylum from the supposed snares of his enemies. He accordingly wrote to that prince a letter full of courtesy and elegance;* and, without uttering a word of his design, he withdrew in a hidden manner from Urbino, and turned his face towards Piedmont.

Tasso leaves Urbino.

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 183.

CHAPTER XIV.

Hospitality which Tasso meets with in his journey to Piedmont —He is repulsed by the Guards from the gates of Turin— His admission into that city, kind reception by the Marquis Philip of Este, and temporary comfort—Writes to Cardinal Albano that he repents of his suspicions, and will endeavour to conquer them—Composes a Dialogue on Nobility—History of, and remarks on, that mode of composition—Tasso returns to Ferrara—is coldly received—and confined in the Hospital of St Anne.

A. D. 1578—1579.
Aet. 34—35.

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

In his journey from the state of Urbino to Piedmont, Tasso met with an incident, which, though far from being of much consequence, yet shall be mentioned, as affording an agreeable picture of courteous hospitality, and as its narration forms the introduction to one of the most pleasing

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

of his Dialogues.* "It was in that season," says he, "when the vintager is wont to press the wine from the mature grapes, and when the trees are in some places despoiled of their fruits, that I, in the habit of an humble traveller, was riding between Novara and Vercelli. Perceiving that the air began to darken, and that mountainous clouds loaded with rain were gathering fast, I began to spur forward my horse, when lo! I heard a barking of dogs mingled with cries. Upon looking back, I saw a wild he-goat pursued by two very swift greyhounds, which, as it was now weary, they soon reached; and it expired almost before my feet. Soon afterward there came a young man of eighteen or twenty years, tall, handsome, elegant, thin, and muscular, who, beating back the dogs and chiding them, took from their mouths the animal which they had killed. He then gave it to a peasant, who put it upon his shoulder, and went off, at a nod from the young man, with a very quick pace; while he, turning to me, said, Tell me, courteous stranger, whither you are going? And I: I wish to arrive this evening at Vercelli, provided the time will allow it. You might reach it perhaps, said he, were it not that the river which flows before the city, and which divides the confines of Piedmont from those of Milan, is swollen to such a degree that it would be dangerous to pass it. I would counsel you, therefore, to consent to abide this night with me,

* *Opere*, vol. VII. p. 365.

who have a small house on this side of the river, where you may lodge with less inconvenience than in any of the neighbourhood. Whilst he was thus speaking, I fixed my eyes upon him, and I thought I discovered in him something extremely noble and graceful; so that I judged him, although he was on foot, a person of no small consequence. Dismounting, therefore, and giving my horse to the hirer, who had come with me, I said that, upon the bank of the river, I would take his advice whether or not I might proceed. I accordingly placed myself behind him, while he said, I will go on before you, not to attribute to myself superiority of honour, but to serve you as a guide: And would to God, replied I, that in every thing else fortune were as propitious as at present, in favouring me with a guide so noble. Here I paused, and followed him in silence; while he frequently turned back, and gazed upon me from head to foot, as if desirous of investigating who I was. It seeming proper for me, therefore, to satisfy in some measure his desire, I said: I never was in this country till now; for though, in a journey to France, I once passed through Piedmont, my route was then different. But I cannot regret having come this way at present, as the country is very beautiful, and is inhabited by a most courteous people. Having thus furnished him an opportunity of conversing, it appeared that he could no longer dissemble his desire of knowing who I was: But tell me, said he, I pray you, who you are, and of what country; and what fortune conducts you into these parts. I was born, replied I, in the kingdom of Naples, a

CHAP. XIV.

A. D. 1578, Aet. 34.

famous city of Italy, and of a Neapolitan mother; but I deduce my paternal origin from Bergamo, a city of Lombardy; my name and surname I conceal, and such is their obscurity, that, should I reveal them, it would not afford you any light: I fly the rage of a prince and of fortune, and seek an asylum in the states of Savoy. And he: You repair to a just, magnanimous, and gracious prince; and speaking thus, he waved the subject, as being modest, and observing that I was unwilling to discover myself. We had now, after walking about five hundred paces, arrived at the bank of the river,* which rushed with the velocity of an arrow from a Parthian bow, and was so swollen, that it was no longer confined by its banks. Here I was informed, by some countrymen, that the ferryman would not pull off from the opposite bank, and that he had refused to carry over some French cavaliers, who had endeavoured to prevail on him by an uncommon reward. Turning, therefore, to the young man who had been my guide: necessity constrains me, said I, to accept that invitation, which also from choice I would not have refused. And he: Although I should have rather chosen to be indebted for this favour to your will, than to fortune, I am pleased, however, that the event has so happened that your stay is no longer dubious. Such was the courtesy of his words, that I was still more confirmed in the opinion that he was neither of ignoble parentage, nor of mean genius; so

* Its name is the Sesia.

being happy at an host of this kind, I replied, If you please, therefore, the sooner I receive the favour of being lodged, it will be the more agreeable. At these words he pointed out to me his house, which was not far distant from the bank of the river. It was a new building, and its height was such as shewed there were several suites of apartments each above the other. Before it was, as it were, a small piazza surrounded by trees; there was also a double stair, one on each side of the door, and each of the stairs consisted of twenty-five broad and easy steps. At the entrance was a saloon of suitable size, and of a form almost square; from which two doors on the right, and two on the left, conducted to suites of rooms, and an equal number were in the upper part of the house. Opposite the door by which we entered was another, which descended by as many steps into a court, round which were offices and rooms for servants; and beyond was an extensive garden full of fruit-bearing trees, and disposed in an elegant and masterly order. The saloon was furnished with gilt leather, and every other ornament suited to the habitation of a gentleman; in the midst of it was a table laid out, and the side board was covered with extremely white earthen ware, loaded with every kind of fruit. The dwelling, said I, is extremely convenient and elegant, and must needs be occupied by a noble gentleman, who need not amidst these woods, and in this villa, desire the polish and delicacies of towns: but, perhaps, added I, you are its master. I am not, said he, but my father is, to whom may God grant a long life; and I will not deny that he has spent

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

the greater part of his life in the country, but yet he is not totally a stranger to courts, and to the world. He has a brother who has long been in the court of Rome, and who still lives there, very dear to the cardinal Vercelli, for whose worth and authority there is, in this country, great esteem: And in what part, replied I, of Italy, or of Europe, is that good cardinal known, where he is not esteemed? While we thus talked, there came another youth, younger than the other, but not less handsome, who told us that his father was returning to the house; and while he spake, his father came on horseback, followed by a footman, and a riding servant. He was a man of a very mature age, and nearer sixty than fifty years; his aspect was at once pleasing, and venerable; and the whiteness of his hair, and hoary beard, while they seemed to add to his age, greatly increased his dignity. Advancing to this good father of the family, I saluted him with that reverence which was due to his years and appearance; while he, turning to his eldest son, said to him, with a pleasing countenance, Whence comes to us this our guest, whom I do not recollect to have seen, either here or elsewhere?... From Novara, replied he, he comes, and is going to Turin; and at the same time, approaching his father, he spoke to him with a low voice, so that he immediately desisted from enquiry, and said: Whoever he be, he is most welcome; and is come to a place where willing honour and service is paid to strangers. And I thanking him for his courtesy, said, Would to God, that, as I at present receive from you the kind offices of hospitality, so at some other

time I may have it in my power to shew myself grateful and remembering. While saying these things, the servant had brought water for our hands, and, after washing, we seated ourselves according to the directions of the old man, who wished to do me honour, as being a stranger. Immediately the table was almost loaded with melons, and there was abundance besides of other fruits which were reserved till the end of supper." Tasso then goes on (after an enumeration of the dishes at table) to relate how the good sire began to speak of those fruits and unpurchased viands; and how, passing from one subject to another, he discoursed of economy, and particularly of agriculture. On these topics our poet talked with great learning; but especially, having spoken in a most sublime, or at least mysterious manner, on the creation of the world, and the motions of the sun, he tells us that his estimable host began to gaze upon him with greater attention. After a pause, he said, "that now he knew that he had given lodging to a more illustrious guest than he had at first supposed; and that, perhaps, he was the person, of whom some rumour had spread in those parts, and who, fallen into misfortunes by some human error, was as much deserving of pardon from the nature of his offence, as he was in other respects worthy of admiration and renown."

This very pleasing story recalls to mind, (what I have ever considered as one of the most beautiful incidents in poetry,) the agnition of Ulysses at the court of Alcinous. Nothing can be more happily imagined than the events

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

preparatory for this purpose, in that wonderful poem. The immense strength of Ulysses; the banquet at which Demodocus sings the exploits of the hero who was present, but who was yet unknown; the tears of that hero; the eager curiosity of Alcinous, and the splendid and attentive audience around, all prepare for the great discovery, and lead us to imagine what a thrill would run through the assembly, when they learned that the divine Ulysses, so renowned, and so unhappy, was the person before their eyes.

Torquato remained a night with the good father and his family, and next morning departed to Vercelli. His money seems now to have been exhausted, for he tells us that he was compelled to wade on foot through mire and water, till he reached Turin.* His situation when he arrived there is strongly painted by Ingegneri, in a dedication to the Duke of Savoy, (in 1581,) of the first complete edition of the *Jerusalem Delivered.* "It is now two years and a half, (says he,) since poor Torquato Tasso, led by his strange melancholy, arrived at the gates of Turin, whence he was repulsed by the guards from an idea of his insanity. Fortunately, in returning from hearing mass said by the capuchins, I met and introduced him into the city, having first informed the guards of his noble qualities, which, though he was in disorder, and on foot, were not quite concealed

Tasso is repulsed from Turin.

* *Opere,* vol. X. p. 380. Di Savoja il faticoso viaggio, che per fanghi, e per acque ho fatto a piedi.

under so low a fortune." By this gentleman (a literary Venetian) Torquato at his own request was accompanied to the palace of the Marquis Philip of Este, who had been acquainted with the poet in more happy times at Ferrara, and who, seeing him arrive in so melancholy a condition, received him in a very kind and affectionate manner. This nobleman was the son of Sigismond, brother of Hercules I. Duke of Ferrara, and, having become son-in-law to Emanuel Filiberto, Duke of Savoy, and general of his cavalry, was established at Turin, and in high favour with the duke. In addition to the kindness which our poet met with from the marquis, offers were made to him by Charles Emanuel, Prince of Savoy, of appointments equal to those he had received at Ferrara, provided he would enter into his service; and that prince was also willing to come under obligations that he would cause his writings to be restored. This account we have in a letter of Tasso to Gonzaga, written in October 1580, but the proposals, however favourable, were not accepted.*

Is admitted and kindly received.

At this period, Torquato wrote a letter to Cardinal Albano, entreating pardon for his former suspicions of him, and soliciting his wonted protection and favour. "If I had not," says he, "by my unsettled imaginations, suspected all in whom I had the greatest reason to confide, I should believe that your lordship (who is one of those whom I mistrusted)

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 413.

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578.
Aet. 34.

has peculiar cause to be offended, since my injustice towards you was in proportion to my motives for gratitude, and to your affectionate regard. But since I have, without distinction, suspected every one, I cannot persuade myself that your lordship will appropriate an offence that is common; on the contrary, from your courteous and affectionate nature, I am led to believe that you will endeavour to render universal, that pardon, and favour, and protection, which I hope from yourself. For, although your own forgiveness, your own restoration of me to your favour and protection, would be sufficient, in a great degree, not merely to calm, but satisfy me; yet it will be still more worthy the grandeur of your agency, if, at the same time, I am assured both of the renovation of your favour, and that of all those lords whom my fortune and melancholy humour have associated in dissatisfaction towards me. And be assured, that by how much more your own kindness, while extended towards me, is accompanied by that of others, by so much more my obligation to you will be individuated; so that, while you procure me the benevolence of many, you will appropriate to yourself my attachment and fidelity. Know, too, most illustrious lord! that I am at Turin, in the court of the Marquis of Este, whom, on account of my old dependence on his most serene house, the love I have for his person, the devotion I cherish for the duke his father-in-law, and the desire I have to live in those parts, I have an infinite desire to serve. And although he has promised to receive me into his service, still, in such an instability of my temper and fortune, his as-

surances cannot appear quite stable, unless they be confirmed by some one, who, by stipulations on the other hand, may promise for me more than I myself can. Now this can only be your lordship, who, by the weight of your authority over me, can fix the motions of my mind, whenever it wavers through inconstancy or folly. But whether this be the defect of my intellect or fortune, repair it, my lord, I beseech you; and establish me in this service in such a manner as may suit your benignity, and the memory which is due to the bones of my father, who served you so affectionately. I promise, on the other hand, that, although my infirmity may lead me to some levity, yet I will never, from any fancy, not even of the most cruel death, be transported to an action which is not good and honourable. This I promise to your lordship, as I have already promised to God, and to my honour; and if, as I expect, you favour me, I hope you shall never have reason to repent it, and that you shall experience in future, that I am as full of gratitude as I have shown myself hitherto of suspicion." *

The cardinal, who greatly loved and esteemed Torquato, wrote in his favour to the Marquis of Este; and, at the same time, the following epistle to his unhappy friend, which, while it remains, will be a distinguished record of the amiable virtues of the writer.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 110.

CHAP. XIV.

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

" Very illustrious Sir, *

" You could not have discovered a method more calculated to obtain pardon, to recover your honour, and to console me and your other friends, than the confession of your error in distrusting every body, a thing not less ridiculous than moving. God grant that you may fully know your mistake, and that it may be a lesson to you in future; and this ought to be the case, as, upon my honour, I assure you, that there is nobody who attempts, or who even thinks, to hurt you in any way; but, on the contrary, every one loves you, and anxiously desires that you may live; such is your singular worth. From effects, you might have been able, and may assure yourself, that your fears and suspicions have been, and are, wholly imaginary; wherefore, banish, I beseech you, and chase them from you. If you do this, we shall all love and honour you; if you act otherwise, you will lose both life and honour; and, whereas you think to escape death by wandering to and fro, undoubtedly, by this means, you will meet it soon. Trust then a person who loves you; be calm, and attend to your studies; and console yourself that you are with the Marquis of Este, who is so very noble and virtuous a lord. Besides, as it is necessary to pluck up by the roots the peccant humour, and as this cannot be done without due medicines and remedies, it will be needful that you

* The cardinal seems to have been aware of Tasso's suspicions of meeting disrespect, for the superscription of the letter is, *Al molto Magnifico Signore Il Sig. Torquato Tasso, a Turino,* and the address, *Molto Magnifico Sig.*

should resolve to be governed by the physicians, and obedient to the counsels of your patrons and friends. Upon the whole, believe that I am, and shall always be, among the first to love and favour you; and God take you under his holy protection. From Rome, the 29th of November, 1578.

As an affectionate brother,
The CARDINAL ALBANO."

Torquato seems to have been serene to a considerable degree after his arrival at Turin, and finished several compositions both in prose and verse. One of these was a very elegant canzone, addressed to Donna Maria of Savoy (wife of the marquis,) and her attendants; from some verses of which it would appear, that our poet had become somewhat enamoured of one of these ladies. * At this time, he also

* This canzone is to be found vol. VI. p. 88. of the works of Tasso, and the following is its conclusion:—

L'altre Io ben lodo e miro;
Ma te canto e vagheggio,
Te, che degli occhi, e del pensier sei segno,
Col tuo lume mi giro,
E sol per grazia cheggio,
Ch'io Te veda senz' ira e senza sdegno.
Tu fecondar l'ingegno
Puoi col soave raggio,
E rinfrescar l'arsura
Con la rugiada pura,

A. D. 1578. Aet. 34.

wrote his dialogue *On Nobility*, chusing as his interlocutors two persons of distinction residing at Turin. The opportunity that it affords of paying a compliment of this kind, is one of the principal conveniences of the mode of writing in dialogue. Another advantage is its susceptibility of agreeable description, especially of the scenes where the persons of the drama are placed. Of this many beautiful examples are presented to us in the Dialogues of Plato, and the long passage which I have lately quoted from *The father of a family*, and which forms its introduction, appears to me a very pleasing specimen. As the greater number of the numerous prose writings of Tasso are in the form of dialogue, it may not be improper to make a few remarks on this method of composition. *

Remarks on the mode of writing in dialogue.

At the dawn of science, when books either did not exist, or were extremely rare, the greater part of knowledge was

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Sì ch'abbia frutti e fior l'Aprile, e'l Maggio;
Onde poscia n'adorni
Gli altari tuoi ne' festi alteri giorni.
Vanne mia Canzonetta, e fra le cinque
Rimira la più bella,
A lei t'inchina riverente Ancella.

* "Fra tutti gli altri modi (says Tasso) stimo questo usato nel Dialogo il più dilettevole, e'l meno odioso; perch'altri non v'insegna il vero con autorità di maestro, ma il ricerca a guisa di compagno: e ricercandolo per si fatta maniera, è più grato il ritrovarlo. E come i cacciatori mangiano più volentieri la preda, nella quale ebber parte della fatica; così quegli, ch'insieme investigaron la verità, partecipano con maggior diletto della comune lode: e gli altri leggono, ed ascoltano più volentieri una amichevole contesa d'ingegni, e d'opinioni." *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 148.

communicated by oral discourse. In the porch, in the garden, or among the groves of the academy, the philosopher discoursed with his disciples, and heard their objections and remarks. The divine Socrates, in particular, was accustomed in this way to communicate his moral lessons; and it was natural for his disciples who recorded these lessons, to adopt the manner in which they had been revealed. While, by writing in the form of dialogue, they painted their master, and the method likewise of instruction common to that age, they gave a greater liveliness or dignity to their remarks; they approximated in some degree to poetry, which is the earliest mode of composition; and gave scope (as particularly was the case with Plato,) to a naturally fertile and poetical imagination.

There are two other circumstances, which, in addition to the manner of his master's instructions, and the character of his own genius, might have made the method of dialogue be adopted by Plato. One great object of that philosopher was to represent the triumph of Socrates over the sophists; and, if a writer wishes to cover a particular person with ridicule, perhaps no better mode could be adopted than to set him up as a man of straw in a dialogue. As particular victory, or the embarrassment of the antagonist of Socrates, was often all that was necessary, it was needless to be very scrupulous about the means; and, considered in this view, the quibbles of that philosopher; his agreeable irony; his address with which, by seeming to yield, he ensnares his ad-

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578.
Aet. 34.

versary; his subtile distinctions; his perplexing interrogations, have a great deal of dramatic merit.

Another circumstance may, in the composition of some of his works, have influenced Plato; and, together with their form, have given them some of that obscurity for which he is reproached. His master, Socrates, had become a victim to popular fury; to those imputations of impiety, which have so often and so successfully been repeated against philosophers. In the schools of his disciples, a double doctrine seems to have been adopted, for the purpose of escaping oppression; and Plato would consider the form of dialogue as affording the smallest hold to his enemies. It was thus, in later times, that Galileo endeavoured to shield himself from the attacks of error and of injustice, and imagined that, by presenting his conclusions in the Platonic manner, he would escape the malignant vigilance of the court of inquisition.

When Tully, towards the close of his meritorious life, employed himself in transferring to Rome the philosophy of Greece, he was in a peculiar degree struck with the manner and sentiments of Plato, whose genius was highly congenial to his own. He accordingly adopted the method of writing in dialogue, a mode, too, which enabled him to pay compliment to his illustrious friends, or to recal, as it were, from the tomb, the heroes and sages of his country. At the revival of literature in modern Europe, admiration of the ancients rendered this method of writing universal. The system of patronage, too, was then at its height; and, by the opportunity which this form of composition affords a writer

of flattering his patron, (sometimes by painting a palace of which he was the proprietor, sometimes by describing him as a Socrates, astonishing his hearers by his acuteness and wisdom,) an occasion was furnished of offering very powerful incense. But while an author could thus sacrifice to interest, the same mode of composition enabled him to satisfy sometimes his friendship, and at other times his gratitude. From these causes, almost all the prose writings in Italy were, in the sixteenth century, composed in the form of dialogue.

Its defects.

As a method of communicating knowledge, however, (except in cases which are extremely obvious, and susceptible of a variety of lights, and much character painting) the mode of dialogue is exceedingly inconvenient. By the interruptions which are given, (if it be at all dramatic,) by the preparations and transitions, precision and order must in a great degree be sacrificed. In reasoning, as much brevity must be used as is consistent with perspicuity; but, in dialogue, so much verbiage must be employed, that the scope of the argument is generally lost. The replies too to the objections of the opponent seem rather arguments *ad hominem*, than possessed of the value of abstract truth; so that the reader is perplexed and bewildered, and concludes the inquiry, beholding one of the characters puzzled indeed, and perhaps subdued; but not at all satisfied that the battle might not have been better fought, and more victorious arguments adduced.

In addition to their disadvantages of form, considered as

CHAP. XIV.
A. D. 1578.
Aet. 34.

subjects of general imitation, the matter of the dialogues of Plato was not always such as could be safely copied. No writer elevates the soul to regions at once so tranquil and sublime; no writer gives us more exalted ideas of human nature, or paints with such fascinating charms the lovely form of virtue. But, not to mention that he frequently directs his attention to questions incapable perhaps of ever being solved, one great error pervades his writings, and indeed the Greek philosophy in general. He bestows little notice on the objects of nature, nor treats of them as invested with certain qualities, or bearing certain relations to each other; but, despising the sensible object which excites in us the idea of the quality, Plato realizes the quality itself, and discourses of the *good*, the *beautiful*, and the *great*, as abstracted contemplations, or as real essential substances. He soars above the region of sensible objects, without, it would appear, gaining a nearer view of the spiritual; and, like the other ancient philosopher, blinds his eyes to material things, without widening the sphere of his intellectual vision. Tasso in his dialogues, endeavoured as much as possible to imitate Plato; and, along with the occasional sublimity, has much of the verbal distinctions and obscurity of his prototype. In addition to this, he is in his later dialogues extremely pedantic, and is continually quoting the Peripatetics, the Platonists, the Arabian commentators, the Fathers, or the Schoolmen. Probably this might be owing to the decay of his memory, which first of his faculties sunk under his disease; and which, being no longer capable of retain-

Of Plato.

ing the seeds of knowledge, they were cast out in the same unaltered and inactive state, without being ripened by genius into those Hesperian fruits and flowers of paradise, of which his youthful mind had been so fertile. *

The dialogue *On Nobility*, which gave occasion to these remarks, was written in the month of December, 1578; † another on the same subject was added some years afterwards, and also one *On Dignity*. Notwithstanding this employment, however, and the courteous treatment he received at Turin, Tasso became uneasy, and applied to Cardinal Albano, to procure a restitution of his books and writings at Ferrara, and some gift from the duke, to enable him to finish his poem in Savoy; but especially, he requested that ecclesiastic to solicit permission for him to return. The cardinal, on his application to Alphonso, obtained a favourable answer, and was told that he was still willing to receive our poet, provided he would allow himself to be cured, and would not burst forth into those reproachful expressions, which, during his last residence, he had used to some of the courtiers. ‡

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* Among the prose works of Tasso, there is a treatise on the art of dialogue, entitled, *Dell' arte del Dialogo. Discorso*, (*Opere*, vol. VII. p. 16.) Those who are studious of this subject, will no where, perhaps, meet with such able instructions.

The first who seems to have brought dialogue writing into fashion in England, was Lord Shaftesbury; but the English writer who approaches nearest the manner of Plato, is Bishop Berkeley, especially in his *Minute Philosopher*.

† *Opere*, vol. X. p. 255.

‡ That these were the conditions we learn from a letter of Tasso, dated at Turin the 10th of February, 1579, and thanking the cardinal for his good offices in this business.

CHAP. XIV.

A. D. 1579. Aet. 35.

Alphonso was on the eve of being married to his third spouse, Margaret Gonzaga, daughter of Duke William of Mantua, and it suggested itself, or was suggested to Tasso, that no occasion could be more favourable than the fortunate event of these nuptials, to obtain a fulfilment of his requests. Impatient to return to Ferrara, at a time, too, when many princes and lords of his acquaintance would be assembled in that city; our poet eagerly asked of the marquis permission to depart. That prudent nobleman, whether he was not fully persuaded of the favourable disposition of the duke, or believed that Tasso's state of mind was not such as to permit his presence (without some disturbance,) at these festivities, not only himself dissuaded him, but engaged some friends of the poet to dissuade him from his journey. He told him, that he himself meant in spring to visit Alphonso, and to compliment him on his nuptials; and that then he would carry our bard along with him. No remonstrances, however, could conquer the obstinacy of his resolution, nor could any thing satisfy him but a journey to Ferrara, which he reached on the twenty-first of February, 1579.

Tasso leaves Turin.

Arrives at Ferrara.

It chanced, unfortunately, that the arrival of Tasso at this city happened the day before that of Alphonso's youth-

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" Ringrazio V. S. Illustriss. del favore, che mi ha fatto col Sereniss. Sig. Duca di Ferrara, al quale son per dare ogni soddisfazione, così di lasciarmi purgare, come di trattare co' suoi in quel modo, che S. A. desidera. Ne ho già scritto al Sig. Conte Scipione dal Sacrato suo favorito; e potendo m'invierò a Ferrara."—Serassi *Vita del Tasso*, p. 280. Maurice Cataneo had (it would seem,) advised Tasso's return to Ferrara, vol. IX. p. 51.

ful spouse at Belvedere; so that every person being full of expectation or employment, he could neither have audience of the duke, nor of his sisters; and it seemed too, that he was slighted by many gentlemen and courtiers, from whom he had expected an affectionate welcome. A thousand times he regretted his departure from Turin, where he had been treated in a manner so kind and so respectful. In a letter addressed to Cardinal Albano, our poet gives him an account of the coldness of his reception, entreats him once more to use his interest with the duke, for a restitution of his writings and his place; but, "above all," says he in the postscript, "I supplicate that you will procure me by your influence some fixed lodging, where I may have an opportunity of study." It must be acknowledged (as some apology for our species,) that, owing to the now suspicious and irritable temper of Tasso, it was extremely difficult to know how to act towards him; and, at a time of bustle and confusion like this, it was natural that he should be overlooked. The idea of his derangement, too, was now fully confirmed, a circumstance which, while it gave claim to protection, gave none to elegance; and genius, however eminent, establishes no right of peculiar aid from one individual more than another. It must be remembered, likewise, that the *Jerusalem* was yet unpublished, and that the portion of talent which was possessed by its author was not capable of being appreciated. Tasso did not then appear, as now, the rival of Homer and of Virgil, the glory of Italy, and of human genius.

Cold reception of Tasso at Ferrara.

Tired at last of solicitation; unregarded by the duke and

CHAP. XIV.

A. D. 1579. Aet. 35.

princesses; neglected, as he thought, by his friends, and derided by his foes; this unhappy man found his patience sink under the trial. Accordingly, giving full scope to his indignation, he burst forth, even in public, into the most keen expressions he could invent against the duke, the whole house of Este, and the principal people of the court. He cursed his former services, retracted all the praises he had been lavish of in his verses; and affirmed that the duke of Ferrara, and all his court, were a mean and worthless crew of thieves, and of ungrateful monsters.

He is confined in the hospital of St Anne.

These and similar expressions coming to the ear of Alphonso, he gave orders that Torquato should be conducted to the hospital of St Anne, a place where sick people of poor condition were attended by physicians, and where lunatics were usually confined. This imprisonment happened about the middle of March, 1579, and for some days quite overpowered all the faculties of the unhappy sufferer. He soon, however, recovered a sense of his misery, and thus bewails his situation in a letter to Gonzaga, written shortly after his confinement: "Ah, wretched me! I had designed to write, besides two heroic poems of most noble argument, four tragedies, of which I had formed the plan. I had schemed, too, many works in prose, on subjects the most lofty, and most useful to human life; I had designed to unite philosophy with eloquence in such a manner, that there might remain of me an eternal memory in the world. Alas! I had expected to close my life with glory and renown; but now, oppressed by the burden of so many cala-

mities, I have lost every prospect of reputation and of honour. Indeed, I should consider myself as sufficiently happy, if, without suspicion, I could quench the thirst with which I am continually tormented; and if, as one of the vulgar, I could lead a life of liberty in some poor cottage, if not healthy, (which I can no longer be,) at least free from this anguish. If I were not honoured, it would be sufficient for me not to be abominated; and if I could not live after the manner of men, I would at least quench the thirst which consumes me, like the brutes which freely drink from stream and fountain. Nor do I fear so much the vastness, as the duration, of this calamity; and the thought of this horribly torments me; especially as, in such a situation, I can neither write nor study. The fear, too, of perpetual imprisonment increases my melancholy; the indignities which I suffer augment it; and the squalor of my beard, my hair, and habit, the sordidness and filth, exceedingly annoy me. But, above all, I am afflicted by solitude, my cruel and natural enemy; which, even in my best state, was sometimes so tormenting, that, often at the most unseasonable hours, I have gone in search of company. Sure am I, that, if she who so little has corresponded to my attachment, if she saw me in such a state, and in such affliction, she would have some compassion on me." *

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 387; Appendix, (No. XXII.) The omission of this last sentence, in his quotation from the letter of Tasso, is one of those *reticences* for which Serassi is blameable. No human being seems ever to have had a higher veneration for rank than this biographer; and this appears to be the chief reason why he is so hostile to the no-

CHAPTER XV.

Harsh treatment of Tasso in the Hospital—He requests the intercession of different Princes for his deliverance—Writes his Dialogue, the Messenger—Extracts from that Work—Publication of a mutilated Edition of the Jerusalem Delivered—Death of the Princess Leonora of Este—Examination of the hypothesis which attributes the mental alienation and imprisonment of Tasso to his love of this Princess.

A. D. 1579—1581.
Aet. 35—37.

CHAP. XV.
A.D. 1579. Aet. 35.

THE prior of the hospital of St Anne was named Augustine Mosti, a Ferrarese of noble birth, and of strict manners, but, if we may believe the testimony of his prisoner, inex-

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tion of an attachment having existed between Leonora and our poet. That this was the cause, indeed, either of his mental alienation, or long imprisonment, I can by no means believe; but I shall examine, by and bye, these different problems, which have never

cusably rigid, and even cruel, to the unfortunate Torquato. A friend and disciple of Ariosto, he had, unhappily, perhaps, for our bard, applied himself to the composition of Latin and Italian poetry; and had even, as appears from his verses, made considerable progress in these *humanizing arts.* * Whether from jealousy, from a ruggedness of nature, from an idea that it might please his enemies, or from a notion that Torquato was altogether frantic, and required violent measures, it seems certain that his conduct towards him was violent and unrelenting. It is true, that it was, perhaps,

Harsh treatment of Tasso in the hospital

yet been properly investigated, and of which it has been despaired that a perfect solution can be given.

It certainly affords no very pleasing picture of the destiny of genius, that the same year [1579] and, perhaps, the same month, in which the most illustrious poet of Italy was confined, as insane, in an hospital, another epic poet, and in another region, finished, in an hospital, his career of glory and of misery. The life of Camöens was scarcely more happy than that of Tasso; and though his *Lusiad* cannot be compared with the *Jerusalem*, yet, if we balance the mutual advantages of the two authors, it is a work perhaps equally wonderful. Both poets, however, if their lives were wretched, have at least attained that fame for which they sighed; and it is a pleasing reflection, that, while the proud and titled grandees, who neglected the Lusitanian bard, are forgotten, or despised, his name is pronounced with respect, even amidst the outrages of violence, and the storms of war. "Public instruction (says Junot, in his proclamation to the inhabitants of Portugal, first February, 1808,) public instruction, that only source of the civilization of nations, shall be diffused through the different provinces, and Algarve and Upper Beira shall also produce their Camöens."

* Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes
Emollit mores, nec sinit esse feros.

I am afraid that this remark of Ovid, with regard to the moral influence of the arts, is not always true of those who cultivate them as productive of glory. In them an ardent thirst of distinction is attended with all the selfishness, and often with all the injustice, of other violent passions.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1579. Aet. 35.

impossible for a person in Mosti's situation to act in such a manner as not to be viewed by his prisoner with aversion and dislike; nor must we, on this account, give a quite unqualified belief to the statement and complaints of our poet. "This only," says he, "I will observe, (in a letter, dated seventeenth May, 1580, and addressed to James Boncompagno, general of the church,) this only I will observe, that I have been above fourteen months infirm in this hospital, without enjoying any of those conveniences which are granted, I say, not to gentlemen of my rank, but even to the meanest plebeian. Nor have I been less deprived of the medicines of the soul than of those of the body; since, although there be a chaplain, who, I believe, is an intelligent man, yet never in my infirmity has he come to visit me, never has he used towards me any act of mercy; nor, although I have beseeched him, has he either confessed me or allowed me to communicate." "He practises towards me, (says he, speaking of Mosti, in a letter to his sister, dated fifteenth April, 1581,) he practises towards me every sort of rigour and inhumanity. He disfavours me in all things, in my attention to my studies, and especially in the impression of my works." In an epistle, too, to D. Angelo Grillo, written in 1584, our poet tells him, that Mosti not only allowed him to be molested by his neighbours, and disturbed in his studies and employments, but that, likewise, from the dependants of the prior, he received many affronts. Hence, adds he, the most holy and charitable thing you could do, would be to deliver me from his hands. It must not be conceal-

ed, however, that Tasso, in this very letter, complains of having been bewitched, and accuses Mosti of being in compact with the magicians, a circumstance which he threatens to tell to the Duke of Ferrara, whenever he shall have an opportunity. *

Torquato endeavoured to render Mosti favourable by addressing to him several sonnets, but (as he still continues to complain) it would seem without much effect. † The prior, however, had a nephew, named Julius Mosti, whose obliging and affectionate disposition compensated, in a great degree, the uncle's defects. This excellent youth was fond of literature, and, accordingly, often visited the hospital to profit by the conversation of its illustrious inmate. Besides the consolation he furnished by his society, he was useful in

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 24, 138. Perciocchè dee sapere, che Io sono stato ammaliato ed egli [Mosti] ha tenuto mano co' Maghi, com' Io diro al Serenissimo Duca di Ferrara, se Io potrò parlarlo, avendo ferma speranza, che non mi debba mancar di giustizia, e di castigare chi m'ha si sceleratamente offeso sotto la parola di sua Altezza.

" Tasso, in his letters, (says Mr Walker, in his *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, p. 95.) often complains to his friends of the want of books, particularly during his confinement in St Anne's, where he was even sometimes denied pen, ink, and paper, and often left in total darkness, when the sun withdrew its beams from the grate of his dungeon. A sonnet addressed to his cat is preserved, in which he begs she will indulge him with the light of her eyes, in order that he might finish a poem in which he was then employed."

This sonnet, of which the last line has been often given, and which has been alluded to by many writers as a proof of the privations suffered by Tasso, cannot at all be regarded as evidence of such privations. It is in the burlesque style, (the production of a mind which, at the time of writing it, was gay and sportive,) and, with another admirable one on the subject of cats, will be found in the Appendix, (No. XXIII.) These animals were numerous in the hospital, and, we shall perceive by and by, that their services were very necessary.

† *Opere*, vol. VI. p. 344, son. 9; 345, son. 10; 351, son. 36; also 383.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1579. Aet. 35.

bringing and sending off letters written to or by Torquato. His kindness made a deep impression on the heart of our poet, who speaks of him warmly in several of his letters, and did him the honour of addressing to him some verses. † In addition to this, he communicated to him his compositions and epistles, allowing him to copy those that pleased him, so that a number of these have been preserved, which would otherwise, perhaps, have been lost.

Tasso implores liberty.

Not long after the confinement of Tasso, he wrote two beautiful and pathetic canzoni, one of them addressed to Alphonso, and the other to his sisters. ‡ In these he entreats mercy and forgiveness, and contrasts his former happiness with his present misery. As no notice seems to have been taken of them, he determined to make application for the intercession of different princes; and, amongst others, to have recourse to the Emperor Rodolph, and to the Cardinal Albert of Austria, his brother. To the former of those princes, our bard wrote a long epistle; to the latter he addressed a discourse on *Heroic Virtue and Charity*, in which he professes to unite, (what was with him a favourite project,) the Peripatetic with the Platonic philosophy. Whether

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 166, 257; X. pp. 265, 274.

† Vol. VI. p. 33, *Chi può sgombrar;* p. 346, *Giulo s'umana gloria*, &c.

‡ *Opere*, vol. VI. pp. 281, 282. These canzoni are among the most beautiful written by Tasso, and are truly astonishing, if we consider his condition at the time when they were composed. On these accounts, and because copies of the lyric compositions of our poet are rare, I shall, (though extremely unwilling to extend it too much,) give them a place in the Appendix, (No. XXIV.)

he has effected this I know not; but the discourse discovers great acuteness, and concludes in a very eloquent and suppliant manner. "Now to you I turn," says he, "a prince heroic and full of charity; and I supplicate that you would exert in my behalf some act of charity, and of heroic virtue. I am that Torquato Tasso who, a few days ago, wrote diffusely to the emperor your brother, informing him who I am, and narrating my misfortunes, so strange and miserable; and all the favour which I entreated of him, I implore from your most serene highness..... If to neither I can offer gold, nor tribute, which might be worthy of your grandeur, yet to both I dare promise to make an annual oblation of the incense of glory, and of the myrrh of perpetuity. In return for which tribute to his imperial majesty, and to your most serene highness, it is but just that, with grateful minds, you should be propitious to my glory, and to the duration of my name and surname; and that you should remove the impediments which I fear will prevent my memory from passing to future ages. Shall the name of him who, through a desire of glory, burned the temple of Diana at Ephesus, and which the Greeks, by common consent, in vain endeavoured to cover with oblivion, shall his name be known to posterity, and must mine be forgotten? Alas! what have I done that this should be the case?" * I quote this passage as demonstrative at once of that thirst of immortali-

* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 220.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1579, Aet. 35.

ty which is ever more ardent in proportion as the mind is noble, and of that lofty confidence (of which we see so many examples in Milton) of powers fitted to attain it.

Torquato at the same time wrote to his old and affectionate friend Scipio Gonzaga, entreating him to intercede, particularly with the prince of Mantua, who was fond of poetry; and, being brother of the new Duchess of Ferrara, might be expected to have considerable influence.* Alphonso was,

* *Opere*, p. 261. In a letter to his sister, dated 15th April, 1581, Tasso complains, that, though he had frequently written to Scipio Gonzaga since his imprisonment, no answer had been received. Al Signor Scipion Gonzaga ho scritto molte volte in molte mie occorrenze, e a tutte le lettere non m'è stato risposto, ix. p. 138. Either the letters of Scipio had been intercepted, or, what is more probable, he was afraid (as Tasso was accustomed to write every thing to him,) that the poet might exasperate still more the Duke of Ferrara. Of the mutilated passages in the epistles of Tasso, relating to his misfortunes, several, I suspect, contained reproachful expressions against this prince.

In one of his letters from the hospital to the steward, Coccapani, Tasso ridicules, in the following admirable manner, the pomposity of Alphonso:—"Prego V. S. che si contenti, se piace al Serenissimo Signor Duca, Serenissimo, Clementissimo, ed Invittissimo, che io stia prigione, di farmi dar le poche robiciuole mie, che S. A. Invittissima, Clementissima, Serenissima m'ha promessa tante volte," &c. vol. ix. p. 239. I am not, however, certain whether this was meant as ironical or as serious; but that Tasso had offended the Duke of Ferrara by writing against him, appears from the following passage of a letter written by him from the hospital of St Anne to Sig. Cornelius Bentivoglio, whom he solicits to restore him to the favour of that prince. "Cercherò che l'emende sian tanto maggiori del fallo, quanto debbono esser più stimate le cose fatte consideratamente, che quelle che son mandate fuori dall' impeto, e dalla frenesia per la quale son degno di scusa e di perdono." Vol. ix. p. 137. "Del Sig. Duca di Ferrara, (writes our poet, June 11th, 1581, to M. Cataneo, who had probably been cautioning him on this head,) debbo sempre scrivere e parlare come principe valoroso, ed onorato molto, nè faro altramente." *Ibid*, p. 359. See also p. 320. "Al Duca di Ferrara (Tasso thus writes to the Neapolitans, vol, X. p. 374,) in servizio ed in onor del quale ho scritte molte cose degne di maggior ricompensa che non è quella, ch'io ardisco d'addimandare. E s'alcuna scritta n'ho non intieramente a suo gusto, o contra la sua riputazione, non debbo perciò meno

no doubt, irritated by these applications and complaints, especially as some of them manifested no disorder of ideas, no feebleness of reason; and, since they shewed only excess of misery, they denounced him as a persecutor. His reply to those who made representations was, that his purpose in confining Tasso was only to benefit and cure him; and, that whenever he was convalescent, he should be set at liberty, and might either remain at Ferrara, or depart whither he would. Oppressed by that sickness of heart which arises from hope deferred, our poet for some time became incapable of composition, and sunk into stupor and dejection. "Nor do I lament," says he, "that my heart is deluged with almost constant misery; that my head is always heavy, and often painful; that my sight and hearing are much impaired; and that all my frame is meagre and extenuated; but, passing all this with a short sigh, what I would bewail is the infirmity of my mind.... My mind (continues he,) slumbers instead of thinking; my fancy is chill, and forms no pictures;

Despondence of Tasso.

arditamente addimandar il premio delle mie fatiche. Perciocchè, s'io l'ho offeso, io l'ho offeso, perchè ho creduto, che voglia essere offeso; e s'egli prendendo la mano d'alcuno, e percotendosi, non può ragione volmente castigarlo, non dee poter ragionevolmente castigare i trascorsi della mia penna, e della mia lingua, che dalla sua violenza e da gli artifici suoi quasi da macchina sono stati sospinti. Io il reputo principe onoratissimo, valorosissimo, e nobilissimo, e sempre posto in mia elezione, come tale l'avrei celebratoe magnificato. Ma non credo già, ch'egli sia o Filosofo; o tale, che dalla verità delle cose non possa ingannarsi." Though Tasso, however, might sometimes attack the Duke of Ferrara, he in general justifies him, and attributes the treatment he met with to servants, who acted contrary to the orders of this prince. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 138, &c.

CHAP. XV.
A. D. 1570. Aet. 35.

my negligent senses will no longer furnish the images of things; my hand is sluggish in writing, and my pen seems as if it shrunk from the office. I feel as if I were chained in all my operations, and as if I were overcome by an unwonted numbness and oppresive stupor."* The feelings of Tasso at this period, seem to have resembled those which Milton attributes to the captived Samson, and which, it is probable, he often experienced himself amidst the darkness and the dangers with which he was surrounded:—

> So much I feel my genial spirits droop,
> My hopes all flat. Nature within me seems,
> In all her functions, weary of herself——
> And I shall shortly be with them that rest.

Torquato's love of composition, however, at last returned, and he composed a Dialogue, entitled *Gonzaga, or of Honest Pleasure*, in which he discovers some very just notions with regard to civil, but especially religious liberty. He particularly praises Venice, as prudent beyond all other cities; "for, as it is ever ready," says he, "to crush all those principles from which might spring sedition, or alteration in the state, so, on the other hand, it is very clement in its chastisements of the imperfections of the human intellect, which are then only punishable when they are accompanied by perversity of

* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 258, 263.

A. D. 1580. Aet. 36.

His Dialogue the Messaggiero.

will, and by the passion of corrupting others."* In 1580, too, he wrote his Dialogue, entitled the *Messenger*, which he dedicated to the prince of Mantua; from whom, soon after his imprisonment, he seems to have received a courteous visit, which revived his hopes, and animated, perhaps, his exertions.† Of this Dialogue, the latter part treats of the office and duties of an ambassador; but the first is wildly beautiful, and is by far the most interesting of the conferences of Tasso. It represents our poet, as talking with a benevolent spirit, who discourses with him on a variety of topics, such as the probability of astrology; the scale of beings, from the lowest animation to the angelic intelligences; and especially of the existence and qualities of demons, or good subordinate spirits. "It was now the hour," says he, "when the approach of the sun began to illumine the east, that I was lying in soft down, not wholly subdued by the sweet influence of sleep, but so affected with it, that my slumber was something between waking and repose. At this time that gentle spirit, who for four years has deigned to converse with me, approached my ear, and said: And dost thou sleep? . . . I,

Feigns a conversation with a spirit.

* *Opere,* vol. VII. p. 327.

† *Opere,* vol. VI. p. 176. *Chiaro Vincenzio,* &c., also vol. VIII. p. 261. This young prince was from early youth so affectionate a patron of Tasso, [see page 23.] that I am willing to hope that the account of his murder of the admirable Crichton is untrue. I have bestowed considerable research, as yet without success, in the investigation of this subject; but, as some of the materials which I have collected concerning Crichton, in the course of the enquiry, are curious, I shall place them in the Appendix, [No. XXV.]

CHAP. XV.
A. D. 1580. Aet. 36.

at that voice, which, soft and sweet, almost entrances my soul, was untied from that chain, which, binding the sentiments in the heart, confined their operations; and, wholly rousing myself, I thus replied: "I slumbered indeed slightly, but thy voice, of which I recognise the sweetness, has awaked me fully; for it sounds not like other mortal tongues, but such is its melody, that I should deem thee a spirit of Paradise, who comes in pity to soothe my sorrows, were it not that thou art more ready with consolation than with aid. But the angels, (according to my belief,) are not less liberal of succour than of comfort; so that, if thou art not angel, and canst not be a guilty spirit, I perceive not clearly what can be thy nature, but am led to suspect sometimes that thou art one of those nocturnal phantasms, of which mention is thus made by the poet:—

Mai notturno fantasma
D' error non fu sì pien, com' ei ver noi.*

At these words the spirit raised its voice, in a manner I had never yet heard; but though it spoke as if in anger, yet still the wonted sweetness of its voice remained, and these were its words:—"Ingrate: Is this the meed of all the favour with which I honour thee, that I am named a phantasm full of horror? and were it not that the charge of thee is entrusted

* Nocturnal phantasm ne'er deceiv'd as he.
Petrarca, canz. *Quel antico mio*, &c.

to me by one whom I must needs obey, I should even be disposed to leave thee."* Tasso goes on to represent himself as extremely incredulous; and though his heavenly visitant adduces strong arguments to prove that the poet is not dreaming, touches him with its hand, and afterwards appears to him in all the effulgence of etherial beauty, he still remains dissatisfied. "Thou hast well proved (says our bard,) that this is not a dream; but, since thou resolvest not every doubt, I am thinking that it is possible, that, though this be not the imagination of a man who sleeps, it may be that of one who wakes, but is a prey to phantasy. Wonderful is the force of the representative faculty; and, though it should seem that it would be most powerful when (as in sleep) the soul, unoccupied with the impressions of external objects, is collected into herself; yet it sometimes happens, that, with the most amazing violence, it chains the senses, and so deceives them, that they can no longer distinguish their proper objects. This I have learned from poets, to whom, on a subject of this kind, much credit is due, and (for example) Petrarch thus sings:—

Che perchè
Mille cose riguardi intento e fiso,
Solo una donna veggio, e'l suo bel viso.†

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* *Opere*, vol. VII. p. 93.

† Whate'er the scene: where'er I fix my eye,
One maid alone, and her sweet face I spy.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1580. Aet. 36.

And again,

Perrochè spesso (or chi fia che me'l creda?)
Nell' acqua chiara, e sopra l'erba verde
Io l'ho veduta, ne'l tronco d'un faggio;
E in bianca nube sì fatta, che Leda
Avria ben detto, che sua figlia perde,
Come stella, che'l sol copre col raggio. ‡

And before him, the prince of poets, describing Dido as enamoured of Eneas, had said,

Illum, absens, absentem auditque, videtque.*

Assuredly it cannot be denied, that there are certain alienations of mind, which, no less than dreams, can represent falsehoods as truths; nay can effect this with still greater energy; since in sleep only the sentiments, in madness the whole reason is chained."†

The naturally luminous soul of Torquato seems at this period to have emerged, in a considerable degree, from its

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‡ Oft (who will think it true?) the maid I've view'd,
In some lone stream; oft to my wondering sight
Some rock pourtrays her, or a beech-tree rude:
Or some fair cloud, where she sits thron'd so bright,
That Leda's self would own her child subdued
In charms; as pale's a star in Phœbus' light.
Petrarca, canz. *Di Pensier in pensier*, &c.

* Him absent, she in absence hears and sees.

† See Appendix, [No. XXVI.]

tempestuous darkness. His literary employments withdrew his mind from the contemplation of its misery, and turned its attention, and fixed it, on agreeable objects. In a letter to Gonzaga, dated the second of September, 1580, in which he gives that nobleman an account of the composition of his *Messenger*, he thus expresses himself:—"I am infirm of body more than I have ever been, unless when forced to confine myself to bed. Nevertheless, as my mind is sound, it seems to me that I am better than I have been these many years."*

A mutilated edition of the Jerusalem is published.

A new source of grief opened at this time upon our poet, by the publication, at Venice, of an exceedingly mutilated edition of his *Jerusalem*. It was printed by Domenico Cavalcalupo, at the instance of Celio Malaspina, who, while in the service of the Grand Duke of Tuscany, having lighted upon some cantos, formed the resolution of publishing them, in opposition to every principle of justice. This earliest edition contains the first ten cantos, extremely incorrect, however, and with several gaps which are not indicated. Of the eleventh and thirteenth cantos, there are only the arguments in prose; the fifteenth begins at the fourth stanza, and, though incomplete, contains many stanzas which had been rejected: and the sixteenth, which in this edition concludes the work, ends at the sixty-first stanza. Never had so mangled an edition of a work been given to the world; and

* Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 294.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1580. Aet. 36.

if Tasso thought that his poem, in its best state, was imperfect, what must have been his despair and indignation at this horrid caricature! He complained to the senate of Venice, and of the Grand Duke;* but the fact is, that he had himself principally to blame, and the wonder is, that a poem so excellent, and so widely diffused, should have remained so long in manuscript.

We have seen that, on the second of September, Tasso had represented his mental health as perfectly restored. As his poem was published in August, it was probably September before it came into his hands, as in a letter to Gonzaga, dated the first of October, 1580, he regrets its being made public, and sends him at the same time *The Father of a Family*, a Dialogue, dedicated to his friend, and composed in this busy year.† Whether the edition of his poem had the effect of again distracting his mind, I know not, but the celebrated Montaigne, who arrived at Ferrara on the fifteenth of November, 1580, represents Tasso in his *Essays*, as at that time helpless, or insane: "I'eu plus de despit encore que de compassion de le voir a Ferrare en si piteux estat, survivant a soy mesme, mescognoissant et soy et ses ouvrages."‡ It seems certain, however, that this is an exaggeration, and that Montaigne was prepossessed, partly perhaps by his own sympathy, partly by the public report.

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 413. † *Ibid.*

‡ Lib. ii. cap. 12., and *Journal de Voyage*, &c. vol. i. p. 175.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1580. Aet. 36.

My opinion is founded on the circumstance, that Tasso, having collected a small volume of poems, written chiefly during his confinement, dedicated them on the twentieth of November, in a very elegant manner, to the princesses of Este, Lucretia and Leonora. This, as he informs them, he did, "that it might be seen that neither the malignity of men, nor that of fortune, had power to deprive him either of the sense of their worth and merit, or of the desire of honouring and of serving them.*

The ear of the princess Leonora, however, was soon to become deaf to praise; as she was at this time afflicted with that indisposition which in a few months afterwards conducted her to the tomb. She seems, as I have formerly remarked, to have been of a very delicate constitution; and, from a letter of condolence, written by Cardinal Albano to her brother the Cardinal of Este, it appears that she had been long sickly; and that she submitted with resignation, and with hope, to the

* The expression of this short dedication seems to me so very happy, that I subjoin the original. Dedico a vostre Eccellenze Illustrissime queste rime, composte da me in questi ultimi anni delle mie infelicità; acciochè vedano, che nè la malignità degli uomini, nè quella della fortuna ha potuto tormi o la conoscenza del valore, e meritò loro, o il desiderio di servirle, e d'onorarle; e mi giova di credere che s'elle il conosceranno, il riconosceranno ancora, nè lascieranno o il giudicio dell' intelletto, o l'affetto della volontà senza alcun premio. Numererò nondimeno fra' premj maggiori, che si degnino, che queste rime passino sotto la protezione del lor nome glorioso alla luce degli uomini, o del mondo, nel quale quanto dureranno, tanto durerà un certissimo testimonio della virtù e grandezza loro, e della servitù mia. Vivano felici. Di Ferrara il 20 di Novembre 1580. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 404.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

doom of immature death. "I have felt (says he,) and feel that grief which an affectionate and obliged servant of your excellency must feel, for the death of Madam Leonora, and this as well on account of the extinction of a light of such goodness, as because you have lost a most fond and most virtuous sister, beloved by you as much as a person can be in this life. But as this event had been (owing to her long and grievous illness,) expected and foreseen, and as I have heard that her blessed soul desired eagerly to depart hence, and be united to her Redeemer; as, besides, she has left here an eternal memory of her most Christian disposition; I am certain that your excellency, by your singular virtue, will mitigate your grief for her loss. This you may do by thinking on the felicity which her blessed spirit enjoys in heaven, where she prays, and will always pray, for you. I beg that you will hold me in your good graces, and believe that I yield to none in reverence and observance; and so I humbly kiss your hands. From Rome, the 15th February, 1581."*

Death of Leonora of Este.

The death of Leonora of Este happened on the tenth of February, 1581, in the forty-fourth year of her age. During her illness, Torquato had written a letter to Panigarola, a celebrated preacher at that time in Ferrara, entreating him to kiss the hand of Leonora in his name, and to say that he prayed for her recovery; that, owing to a certain repugnance of his genius, he had not lamented her sickness in verse;

* Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 297.

but that, if she could attend to such things, he was willing to exert himself for her amusement, upon any cheerful poetical topic.* Whether the compliment was delivered, or what answer was given to it, is uncertain. On the death of the princess, a vast number of elegiac verses, sufficient to form a volume, was composed by the servile band of rhymers.† Torquato, however, was silent on the occasion; whether he was indignant at her neglect of him during his misfortunes, or was oppressed by the burden of weightier sorrows. One cannot help observing on this occasion, that the love or friendship of a celebrated man confers a distinction far beyond the trappings of rank or affluence. The birth, the beauty, and virtues of Leonora, would have availed nothing to have secured her from oblivion. She might have been courted by kings, and espoused by an emperor, without exciting curiosity or interest. But the idea that she once disturbed the imagination, and inflamed the heart of the painter of Armida; the idea of the tyranny of those charms, which could rouse to fury, or subdue to

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* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 272.

† This work was published at Vincenza, 1585, in 4to, and was dedicated to the Cardinal of Este, by its editor, Gregory Ducchi. It is entitled *Lacrime di diversi Poeti Volgari e Latini sparse per la morte dell' Illustriss. ed Eccellentiss. Madama Leonora di Este*, &c. The name of Tasso is only once mentioned [at page 56.] This Serassi attributes to the jealousy of Ducchi, who published a long and forgotten poem, in octave rhyme.

Among the letters of B. Guarini, is one of condolence to the Duchess of Urbino, on the death of her sister, which is so very elegant, that, as the book is rare, I shall give it a place in the Appendix, [No. XXVII.]

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

helplessness, a mind so mighty; this has invested with glory the princess of Ferrara, and will make the name of Leonora, like that of Laura, familiar and distinguished in every age.

Inquiry into the causes of Tasso's mental alienation and confinement.

The mental alienation and confinement of Tasso have generally been attributed to love for this princess; an opinion which was prevalent at a very early period. J. Eliot, in his *Orthoepeia Gallica*, (printed in 1593,) says, in a very *naïve* manner, when speaking of our poet, "This youth fell mad for the love of an Italian lass, descended of a great house, when I was in Italy." But what shews still more strongly the universal diffusion of the story throughout Europe, is, that Scipio Gentili, who was residing in London in 1584, and who published that year a Latin translation of the two first books of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, attributes to this passion the distraction and imprisonment of Tasso, in some Hendecasyllables prefixed to his translation. *

The first, however, who gave celebrity to this hypothesis, was Manso, in his *Life of Tasso*, though he speaks with considerable circumspection on the subject. Milton who, when in Italy, must have conversed at great length with this nobleman concerning his illustrious friend, seems to have adopted

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Mutis abditus, ac nigris tenebris,
In quas præcipitem dedere cæci
Infans Lydius, Antiique Diva,
Britannos tamen, ultimos et Indos,
Torquatus Solymis ciet Camænis;
Et liber volat aureæ per orbem,
Gloriæ sibi remigante penna, &c.

his sentiments with regard to the origin of Tasso's malady. He alludes to it in a beautiful Latin epigram, one of three addressed to Leonora Baroni, an Italian lady, by whose charms and voice the author of *Paradise Lost* had, while residing in Italy, been deeply captivated. Of this epigram, the following translation is given by Dr Symmons, in his interesting life of the English poet:—

TO LEONORA SINGING AT ROME.

Another Leonora's charms inspir'd
The love that Tasso's frensied senses fir'd.
A fate more blest the wretched bard had found,
Had your bright beauties shot the burning wound;
Oh! had he heard the wonders of your song,
As leads your voice its liquid maze along;
Or seen you, in your mother's right, command
The lyre, while rapture wakes beneath your hand:
By Pentheus' wildness though his brain were toss'd,
Or his worn sense in sullen slumber lost,
His soul had check'd her wanderings at the strain,
The soothing charm had lull'd his stormy brain:
Or breathing, with creative power endued,
In his dead bosom, sense and joy renew'd. *

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* AD LEONORAM ROMÆ CANENTEM.

Altera Torquatum cepit Leonora Poëtam,
Cujus ab insano cessit amore furens.
Ah miser! ille tuo quantò felicius ævo,
Perditus et propter te, Leonora, foret!

CHAP. XV.
A. D. 1581.
Act. 37.

Milton, it would appear, did not know, or did not recollect, that Leonora of Este was an admirable singer. The power of her voice, in tranquillising the soul, is celebrated by Tasso in a very beautiful sonnet, written while that princess was, on account of indisposition, prohibited from singing by her physicians:—

What envious Fate rules with relentless sway,
And all that sooth'd the troubled heart arraigns;
What envious Fate malignantly restrains,
And robs the world of, thy bewitching lay.
Ah me! each mental cloud it chac'd away,
Each vice, or passion which the bosom pains;
Wak'd by its melody, the soul her chains
Shook off: and, ardent, follow'd virtue's ray.
Yet, 'twere unjust each pleasure of the skies
To taste on earth; and, sure, these eyes serene,
That holy, blissful smile, may well suffice.
For what new raptures would to heav'n belong,
If, as in thee, an angel's form is seen,
We heard, Oh maid! from thee an angel's song. *

Et te Pieriâ sensisset voce canentem
Aurea maternae fila movere Lyrae; †
Quamvis Dircaeo torsisset lumina Pentheo,
Saevior, aut totus desipuisset iners;
Tu tamen errantes caecâ vertigine sensus
Voce eadem poteras composuisse tuâ;
Et poteras, aegro spirans sub corde quietem
Flexanimo cantu restituisse sibi.

† The mother of Leonora Baroni, was Adriana of Mantua, almost equally celebrated as a musician with her daughter.

* Ahi, ben è reo destin, ch'invidia, e toglie
Al mondo il suon de' vostri chiari accenti;
Onde addivien, che le terrene genti
De' maggior pregi impoverisca, e spoglie.

CHAP. XV.

A D. 1581. Aet. 37.

Not only Milton, but every writer since the time of Manso, (whether Italian or foreigner,) by whom Tasso is mentioned, continued to attribute his misfortunes to his passion for Leonora. It seemed difficult to account for the altered kindness of Alphonso, and for the strict and long confinement of our poet, without supposing that he must have wounded in a high degree the feelings of that prince. This being established, the next inquiry was, how this was effected; and as Alphonso had an unmarried sister, who was fond of literature, and shewed a friendship for Tasso, it was concluded that the indignation of the Duke of Ferrara was

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Ch'ogni nebbia mortal, che'l senso accoglie,
Sgombrar potea dalle più fosche menti
L'armonia dolce, e bei pensieri ardenti
Spirar d'onore, e pure, e nobil voglie.
Ma non si merta quì forse cotanto,
E basta ben, che i seren' occhi e'l riso
N'infiammin d'un piacer celeste, e santo.
Nulla fora più bello il paradiso,
Se'l mondo udisse in voi d'Angelo il canto,
Siccome vede in voi d'Angelo il viso.

Opere, vol. VI. p. 59.

Tasso, in this sonnet, had evidently in view the following lines of Petrarch, in, perhaps, the most beautiful of his canzoni, *Amor se vuoi*, &c.

Fammi sentir di quell' aura gentile
Di fuor, si come dentro ancor si sente;
La qual era possente
Cantando d'acquetar gli sdegni, e l'ire,
Di serenar la tempestosa mente,
E sgombrar d'ogni nebbia oscura, e vile;
Et alzava'l mio stile
Sovra di se, dov' hor non poria gire.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

produced by some mutual attachment of the princess and poet; especially as he had written her a number of verses, expressive (as usual) of admiration and love. These considerations, if they did not give birth to the hypothesis, rendered it credible; and, besides, there is a certain pleasure in finding that an uncommon genius has met with uncommon adventures; nor is it without regret that one supplants an agreeable fiction by the naked realities of life.

Sentiments of Tiraboschi concerning Tasso's confinement.

The first who seems to have suspected that the imprisonment of Tasso might not be owing to his passion for Leonora was Tiraboschi. "Nothing (observes this writer,) is more generally known than the misfortunes of that great man, and nothing is more uncertain than their real origin. Giambatista Manso, Marquis of Villa, an intimate friend of Tasso during the last years of his life, speaks at great length of his calamities in his diffuse biography of the poet; examines the different sources to which they have been attributed; and, after all, leaves the matter in obscurity. Muratori, too, has tried to throw light upon this intricate problem; but, although he had the superintendence of the archives of the house of Este, he has not been able to illumine the subject. In fact, I believe, that success is scarcely possible." * Tira-

* *Storia, &c.* vol. II. pp. 230, 4. ed. Mathias. Muratori's discussion (which is contained in a letter to Apostolo Zeno,) is to be found *Opere del* Tasso, vol. X. p. 235. This writer remarks, that it appears that Tasso himself did not know the cause of his confinement, since he attributes it now to one thing, now to another: "Sembra (says Muratori,) che nè pure il Tasso medesimo sapesse il perchè egli fosse detenuto in quella poca gloriosa prigione.... A misura de' suoi delirj egli si andava figurando, che or da questa, or da quella parte fosse a lui provenuta una si fiera tempesta."

boschi then remarks, that the only sources of information on this matter, are the contemporary historians of Ferrara, and the works of Tasso himself. He informs us, that, not satisfied with consulting such histories as had been published, he had examined seven or eight in manuscript in the library of the house of Este; and that all of them preserve the deepest silence on the subject. "If we turn from these (continues he) to the works of Tasso, we see him so confused, so uncertain, so incoherent in his expressions, that the more we read, the greater is the obscurity and doubt. Hence, perhaps, it happened, that even the Marquis Manso has been unable to instruct us; for, as he knew not Tasso till the fancy of that poet was disturbed, he could not derive from him the necessary information. Amidst such dreary darkness I can only grope." In a note subjoined to his work, Tiraboschi tells us, that, from some letters he had just found in the ducal library at Modena, he was induced to believe that the only motive of Alphonso in confining Tasso, was to have him cured of his distemper. As the nature of his work did not admit the detailed publication of these documents, he transmitted them to Serassi, to be inserted in this writer's *Life of Tasso*; and, in a note to the second edition of his history, Tiraboschi expresses himself pleased with the use that had been made of them by that biographer.

Arguments of Serassi.

Serassi adduces a number of arguments for the purpose of establishing, that the imprisonment of Tasso was occasioned by the violent expressions which he had used against

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

Alphonso, when on his return from Turin, he did not meet from that prince with the attention he expected. * Of this, he observes, we have several convincing proofs in the works of Torquato himself. Thus, in a letter to the Duke of Ferrara, the poet says, " I throw myself at the feet of your clemency, oh most clement prince, and I supplicate that you would grant me your pardon for the false, and rash, and foolish words, on account of which I was imprisoned." † To Sig. Hercules Rondinelli, also, he thus writes; " Two years ago, I came to the marriage of Signora Margaret Gonzaga at Ferrara, influenced by the authority of Cardinal Albano; but, not meeting from the most serene duke with those attentions which I had been led by the cardinal to expect, I burst, through excess of anger and of indignation, into some errors, for which I was confined." ‡ In a letter, too, to the Duchess of Ferrara, he thus expresses himself: " I ask not pardon for my thoughts or intentions, with which I never injured either others or myself; but for my words, in which the violence of others had a larger share than my own will." Similar passages are to be found in various parts of his works, in which, while he confesses the imprudence of his words, he protests the innocence of his deeds. || In a canzone likewise, addressed to the Princesses of Ferrara, which will be

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 283.
† *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 174.
‡ *Opere*, vol. X. p. 68.
|| *Ibid*, vol. IX. pp. 198, 308. VIII. 259.

found in the Appendix, are verses of the following import: CHAP. XV. A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

The pains that I endure
Well I deserve—I err'd, and yet my tongue
Alone was guilty; for my heart was pure. *

Besides, in a sonnet addressed to Alphonso, in which he requests the pardon of this prince, Tasso repeats the same sentiments:—

Oh generous lord! if ever from the course
Which duty points (and love) my tongue has stray'd;
Each dictate of my heart it disobey'd,
A heart which, though 'tis guiltless, feels remorse. †

Indeed, for a considerable time previous to the imprisonment of Tasso, he had altogether lost the favour of the Duke of Ferrara by his wish to leave his service, and to enter into that of the Medici. ‡ He had offended him by his obstinacy in refusing to submit to medical advice, and by imputing to him and to his favourites the most treacherous designs. ‖ During his imprisonment, he considered and represented

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* Merto le pene, errai,
Errai confesso, e pure
Rea fu la lingua, il cor si scusa e nega.
Op. vol. VI. p. 283.

† Generoso Signor, se mai trascorse
Mia lingua sì, che ti nojasse in parte,
Non fu mossa dal cor, che ad onorarte
Devoto intende, e se per duol rimorse.
Op. vol. VI. p. 196.

‡ *Life*, vol. I. p. 232, *et seq.*

‖ *Ibid*, vol. II. pp. 14, 32.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

Alphonso as a cruel persecutor, and was continually making applications for deliverance, even to the enemies of that prince.* If we weigh all these circumstances on the one hand, and, on the other, take into account the haughty and vindictive temper of the duke,† we shall be disposed, perhaps, to think that the elements thus furnished, are sufficient to solve the problem of Tasso's long confinement.

Tasso's confinement, or his derangement, not to be attributed to love.

In fact, as far as the mere confinement of our poet is concerned, (and were it not certain, from several circumstances, that Alphonso was irritated,) it is so far from being necessary to suppose that this prince was actuated by any spirit of vengeance, that it might be alleged as a proof of his humanity and benevolence. For let us reflect on the particulars of this imprisonment. Tasso had afforded to the duke the most unequivocal symptoms of mental alienation; he had wandered away twice from Ferrara, and exposed himself to the most imminent distress and danger. What then was to be done by a person the most warmly interested in the poet's welfare? Precisely, perhaps, what was done by the orders of Alphonso;—he was to be confined in some place where he should not be exposed to perish miserably. It may be also, that the harsh usage which Tasso complains he met with when he first entered the hospital, (for, if he met with harsh usage at all, it seems to have been temporary,) it may be, I say, that this was for the purpose of inducing him to take the medicines prescri-

* *Life*, vol. II. p. 67, *et postea*.

† *Ibid*, vol. I. pp. 124, 343.

bed by the physicians; and how long is it since, in countries the most enlightened, this mode of treatment has been receded from? * Had Tasso been confined on account of his passion for Leonora, what purpose did it serve to retain him so many years after the departure of this princess, whose conduct, according to every account, had been irreproachable. After the death of a beloved sister, and when all danger was at an end, it is more natural to suppose that the heart of a brother would be warmed towards the person, however humble, who had admired and celebrated her; while a different mode of treatment was blasting her reputation, as giving the public room to conjecture that the injury must have been extreme, which required so great an expiation.

As Serassi has not developed this subject with sufficient evidence, and has said nothing at all on the sources of Tasso's distraction, the romantic idea that the imprisonment as well as derangement of this poet was owing to love

* "It has been recommended (says Mr Haslam, *Observations on Madness*, 2d edit. p. 283,) by very high medical authority, (Cullen,) to inflict corporal punishment upon maniacs, with a view of rendering them rational, by impressing terror. From Dr Mead's Section on Madness, it would appear that in his time flagellation was a common remedy for this disorder.....Dramatic writers (continues he) abound with allusions to the whip, in the treatment of madness: "Love *is* meerely a madnesse, and, I tel you, deserves as well a darke house, and a whip, as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so *punish'd and cured* is, that the lunacie is so ordinary, that the whippers are in love too." *As You like it*, act. III. sc. 2.

It does not appear that Tasso was ever subjected to such infamous and inhuman usage, yet it is probable that Shakespeare (who seems to have had as excellent a heart as any man, and who was at least as good a philosopher as Alphonso,) would have given directions for this mode of cure. It is only indeed within the last few years that the unhappy victims of insanity have been considered as objects of moral treatment.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

for the Princess Leonora has not been abandoned since the publication of his work. No better proof can be given of the indistinctness with which Serassi has treated the question, than that, after the perusal of his *Life of Tasso*, the very learned and elegant author of the *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, confesses himself a convert to the hypothesis of Manso. "Anxious (says he) to vindicate Leonora from any criminal passion for Tasso, Serassi argues that she was a temple of honour and of chastity. That this fair temple did not yield to the amorous assaults of Tasso, I am willing to believe, but it is probable that Alphonso thought it necessary to oblige the poet to raise the siege." * It is to be remarked, however, in opposition to this hypothesis, that the imprisonment of Tasso took place not when he might have been considered as a dangerous lover, but above an year and a half after he had given the strongest symptoms of insanity, and was wandering through the country in a state of helpless distraction. Alphonso must needs have had the most astonishing idea both of the inflammatory passions of his sister, and of the insinuating gallantry of the poet, if, in circumstances such as now stated, he considered him as a very attractive suitor.

Besides, who was this fond doating girl, whose honour and reputation it required such barriers to preserve. Leonora of Este was born in 1537, and consequently, in 1579,

* *Hist. Memoir*, &c. p. 128.

when Tasso was imprisoned, had reached her forty-second year. * This does not seem to be the age of love; especially as her health had been exceedingly delicate, and subject to continual indispositions. It is to be remarked, likewise, that this frantic fondness was not the result of a few interviews, but must have reached this distracting height fourteen years after the arrival of Tasso at Ferrara, and amidst daily habits of social intercourse.

Nor, on the other hand, did the passion of Tasso, according to the hypothesis which I am now combating, break forth at a period of life when love is felt most readily; nor in indolence and ease, when the heart is tired of being at peace. It assailed him with such violence amidst the torments of ungratified ambition and disappointed glory, at a time when despondency was quenching the ardour of expectation and the hope of immortality. Such a supposition is very improbable; and it is the more so, as, in a soul which proposes fame as the object of its pursuit, every other desire, however violent, is subordinate to that passion. It is to be recollected, too, that, at the period immediately preceding his mental alienation, Tasso was exceedingly desirous of leaving Ferrara; and that to this very desire,

* This is Muratori's account; but, according to Serassi, she was two years older, "Madama Lucrezia (says he, p. 129,) era nata nel 1534, e Madama Leonora l'anno seguente." He quotes Caferra *Synth. Vetust.* p. 159; but, as Muratori mentions the month and day, I am disposed to think he is right. See vol. I. p. 133, of this work. The dates there given, in some degree, authenticate each other.

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

a considerable portion of the anger of Alphonso is to be attributed.* This does not correspond with his supposed frantic passion for Leonora; nor do his frequent attachments to other ladies strengthen the probability of the existence of such a passion.

It would appear, therefore, that the confinement of Tasso (which was essential both to the comfort of his friends, and his own safety,) cannot, with any semblance of reason, be imputed to his love for the sister of Alphonso; a hypothesis which seems to have been framed for the purpose of solving a problem, which can be determined from other elements. A similar remark may be made with regard to the distraction of our poet, which has likewise been attributed to his passion for Leonora. Newton has established it as a rule of philosophising, that no more causes are to be assigned for the explanation of natural events, than what, besides being true, are sufficient to explain the phenomena. If we apply this to the life of Tasso; if we consider the effects which perplexity, disappointment, and persecution, are calculated to

* "Io ho conosciuto per esperienza," (writes Tasso on the occasion of one of his nephews wishing to leave the service of the prince of Mantua, with whom he had placed him,) i Principi soglion dare malvolentieri licenza a molti, che mal volentieri hanno ricevuti a' lor servigii; perciocchè non pare, che si convenga alla grandezza loro, che alcuno disperi della loro liberalità." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 334; and again, "Questa mattina ho avute lettere del Sig. Maurizio Cataneo, che mio nepote vorrebbe andare a' servigi del Sig. Principe di Molfeta: nè so bene, se ella sia necessità, o incostanza. S'è necessità, venendo a S. Benedetto, avrei pregato il Signor Duca, che ci provvedesse; se incostanza, mi rincresce, che non abbia voluto prendere esempio da quella parte dalla quale egli s'ha preso nuovo cognome.' *Ibid*, 78, 79.

produce on a proud, a feeling, and overheated mind, we shall rather wonder that it so long resisted the shock.

In fact, I think it impossible to read with attention the present work, from where Tasso first sends his *Jerusalem* to be revised till the period of his paroxysm, without concluding that the great exciting causes of his distraction were the objections made to his poem. Possessed of an inordinate ambition, and fretful impatience for literary glory, he had laboured ten years in the most assiduous manner; and he found at last, that his work would either not appear at all, or appear mutilated and imperfect. It were needless to repeat what has been already said of Tasso's impatience for renown, his suspence amidst contradictory criticisms, his fatigue in reviewing and altering his poem, and all the sources of debility and irritation which have been detailed in his story. Nor is it at all surprising that his faculties suffered in the concussion produced by the sudden transition from the ardent hope of almost certain success, to bitter disappointment; from the sweetest gratifications of self-love, to the most piercing torments of humiliation. His purpose, too, of leaving Ferrara, and of entering into the service of the Medici, while it lost him the favour of Alphonso, subjected the poet to the reproach of faithlessness and ingratitude. Thus he was overwhelmed at once with a disappointment of glory, and of fortune; the brilliant flame of expectation was quenched; and nothing was left to the un-

CHAP. XV.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

happy Tasso, but the dreary prospect of eternal poverty, dependence, and neglect.

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* Appendix, (No. XXVIII.) Whatever opinions were formed in places distant from Ferrara, relative to the distraction of Tasso, it seems evident, I think, from the following circumstance, that in this city, where facts were known, the insanity of our poet was not attributed to love. In 1580, (the year after Tasso's imprisonment,) he was visited at St Annes by Montaigne, who, from the natural frankness of his character, and writing, too, in a different country, was under no restraint in narrating what he had learned. This author, however, in his *Essais*, (published almost immediately after his visit, and which were probably read by Tasso himself,) attributes the mental alienation of our bard to the elevation of his soul, and his great intellectual labours. After remarking the near alliance between genius and madness, and the thin partition betwixt them, Montaigne thus continues, "Qui ne sçait combien est imperceptible le voisinage d'entre la folie avec les gaillardes eslevations d'un esprit libre, et les effects d'une vertu supréme et extraordinaire? Platon dit les melancholiques plus disciplinables et excellens, aussi n'en est-il point qui ayent tant de propension à la folie. Infinis esprits se treuvent ruynez par leur propre force et souplesse. Quel saut vient de prendre de sa propre agitation et allegresse, l'un des plus judicieux, ingénieux et plus formez à l'air de cette antique et pure Poësie, qu' autre Poëte Italien aye jamais esté? N'a-il pas dequoy sçavoir gré à cette sienne vivacité meurtriere? à cette clarté qui l'a aveuglé? à cette exacte et tenduë apprehension de la raison, qui l'a mis sans raison? à la curieuse et laborieuse queste des sciences qui l'a conduit à la bestise? à cette rare aptitude aux exercices de l'ame, qui l'a rendu sans exercice et sans ame? I'eus plus de dépit encore que de compassion, de le voir à Ferrare en si piteux estat survivant à soy-mesme, méconnoissant et soy et ses ouvrages; lesquels sans son sceu; et toutefois à sa veuë, on a mis en lumiere incorrigez et informes." Liv. II. chap. 12. Nothing can be more decisive than this passage to show, that, in 1580, the story of Tasso's madness on account of love was not admitted, or perhaps even conceived, at Ferrara.

CHAPTER XVI.

Other editions of the Jerusalem, and grief of its author on this account.—Letter, in which he gives a narrative of his melancholy condition.—Publication of his 'Rime,' corrected by Guarini.—Offence given by his Dialogue, "Gonzaga, or of Honest Pleasure."—Tasso's prolonged indisposition.—Continuation published of his Jerusalem.—He employs himself in writing dialogues.

A. D. 1581 — 1584.
AET. 37 — 40.

CHAP. XVI
A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

THE edition of the *Jerusalem Delivered* by Malaspina, although on his part a most unjustifiable proceeding, had the good effect of bringing forward others less mutilated and imperfect. The first of these was by Angelo Ingegneri, a friend and admirer of Tasso, who, in the space of six nights, had transcribed a manuscript of the *Jerusalem*, which, as Ingegneri affirms in his preface, had been revised by the author himself. As of the different editions of this poem, however, a very full account shall be given in the Appendix, it is not

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

necessary to examine here their different merits. It will be sufficient at present to observe, that seven large impressions, one of Lyons, and the others of different cities of Italy, were disposed of in the year 1581.* In the following year, six editions saw the light; and, in short, the diligence of the printers could scarcely keep pace with the avidity of the public. The arguments, which were generally prefixed to the cantos in the early editions, and which are still most commonly printed, were composed by Horace Ariosto, whom I have already mentioned as grand-nephew of the poet. From one of the letters of Tasso to Coccapani, who had applied to him for arguments to his poem, it appears that in Italy it was thought disgraceful to be under the necessity of composing these for one's own compositions. "Whenever," says he, "my poem shall be printed with my consent, (which I cannot at all bring myself to give,) I should wish that it might carry along with it so much authority as to merit, from some person of talents, the honour of arguments. If I myself composed them, it would seem, either that it did not deserve this compliment from any one, or that I thought nobody equal to the task; the one of which opinions would be false, the other overweening. If you wish to see how I can make arguments, I am ready to compose them, either for Ariosto, or for the book of Sig. Erasmus Valvasone....

Arguments of the Jerusalem.

* One of these editions was to the extent (as we are informed by the editor,) of thirteen hundred copies, and some of the others were probably equally numerous. *Lett. di Ingegneri.* Edit. Viotti. Parma, 1581, in 8vo.

If Ariosto be your choice, send me a copy, and you shall see that I will do my endeavour that he may want no honour which it is in my power to bestow; nor have reason to envy Virgil, for whom they were made by Ovid." *

Wrongs committed against its author.

While the editors and booksellers were thus enriching themselves at his expence, Tasso himself was still languishing in confinement. Had he allowed his poem to be printed three years before, that is, in the year 1578, he tells us that he would have gained at least many hundred scudi, and that a thousand scudi had also been offered him for that purpose, by one of the Lords of Este.† "I have been disfavoured," says he, in a letter written some years afterwards, "or rather oppressed, as every body knows, though nobody will acknowledge it. This oppression too is of that sort which weighs the heaviest, I mean in my studies, and the fruits of my labours. Of my *Godfrey* alone, more than three thousand ducats have been already made, as I am credibly informed."‡ Tasso particularly complains of one Febo

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* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 77. † *Ibid*, vol. IX. p. 308.

‡ *Ibid*, p. 471. See too a pathetic sonnet on this subject, *Io sparsi, ed altri miete*, &c. *Ibid*, p. 18. Guarini likewise often makes heavy complaints against the printers and booksellers of that age. "Hoggi," says he, on one occasion, "dunque ci stilleremo noi il cervello, per arrichire gli stampatori; e quei privilegi, che dovrebbon esser propri de Vertuosi, si concederanno a gli Avvoltoi, alle Arpie degli altrui Scritti?" &c. *Lettere*, p. 49. "Io son (writes Torquato of his booksellers,) Io son pure il buon Tasso, il caro Tasso, l'amorevol Tasso, e sono ancora l'assassinato Tasso; ma son risoluto che la cosa per l'avvenire vada in un altro modo." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 484.

CHAP. XVI. A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

Bonnà, who had given two very good editions of the *Jerusalem*, of which he had promised to the author a share of the profits. "Febo," says he, "is very avaricious; after having published my book, he feasts in Paris among dames and knights, without giving me any share of the profit, a thing which he had promised me to do by a written note."* Some of the editors (particularly Ingegneri,) by dedicating the work to different great men, laid the foundation of patronage to themselves; while Tasso had nothing but the barren praise. Even this was soon afterward denied him; and a cruel conspiracy was formed against his fame.

It certainly gives very little encouragement to those who pursue the study of poetry, as a source of profit, that, for the two noblest poems ever composed, the author of the one received only ten pounds, paid by instalments, the author of the other, nothing. Fortunately, nature has annexed to the exercise of great talents, the most exquisite pleasure; and the creators of such works were sufficiently rewarded, by the glorious images which had fascinated their imaginations, and by the generous sentiments which had warmed their hearts.

But though Tasso derived no immediate emolument from his poem, yet, in other respects, the publication of that

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 359. Tasso's great anxiety on hearing that his *Jerusalem* was also printing in Naples, appears from a letter to his sister, vol. X. p. 275. See too about the Genoa edition, IX. p. 36.

work appears to have been of use to him. His reputation, till now, had been rather a concession than a right; and those even who had examined his poem could not be certain of the extent, nor, perhaps, of the justice of their approbation, without the concurrence of that very public, whose opinions they directed, and of which they were the most enlightened. One of the causes of Alphonso's suspicion was removed by the publication of the *Jerusalem*; and, as its author was viewed by the public with greater respect, he was treated in the hospital with more attention. The uncomfortable apartment which he at first occupied, had been exchanged, in December, 1580, for one more large and convenient; and to this some other chambers were now added.*

* "With what mingled emotions of pain and horror," says Mr Walker, [*Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, p. 128,] "did I explore this dungeon [where Tasso was confined,] in the year 1792! Damp, dimly lighted, and too low in many parts to allow me to stand erect; I could scarcely persuade myself that I was visiting the prison house of the greatest modern epic poet, and of a truly amiable and accomplished man, whose only crime was ambitious love."

In a letter to my learned friend, I took the liberty to remark, that it is not improbable, that at Tasso's first admission into the hospital, a system of coercion was used, and his apartment might be bad; but that it is certain, that, during the greater part of his residence at St Anne's, his chamber was comfortable. In an epistle to Curzio Ardizio, (*Opere*, IX. p. 151. Serassi, pp. 307, 311,) written in December 1580, our poet says, "Paga desidero che rimanga V. S. di questo, che rispondendo a due sue dimande ho scritto, almeno sino a tanto, che oltra questa stanza, la qual per cortesia del Sig. Agostino (Mosti,) m'è stata data *assai comoda*, mi sia data l'altra che m'è vicina, assai più ampia, ove possa filosofando passegiare." Tasso was visited in the hospital by many illustrious persons, and an universal indignation would have been excited, had his abode been such as is now pointed out. The Ciceroni of Ferrara, however, according to the usual practice of such persons, have no doubt fixed upon the most loathsome den in the hospital as the apartment of Tasso, by which means they excite in a greater degree the wonder

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

In spring he was visited by the Prince of Mantua, in company with his old and dear friend Scipio Gonzaga; a circumstance which gave him much pleasure, and inspired him with hopes of a speedy deliverance. This, indeed, did not take place; but, during the course of 1581, he met with considerable attention. He even spent a day at the house of Marfisa da Este, cousin of the duke, and wife of the Marquis of Massa, and Carrara. At her palace, he met with two beautiful and excellent ladies, Tarquinia Molza, and Ginevra Marzia, and he has immortalized the memory of this meeting, by a dialogue, entitled *Molza, or of Love.* Nor must I omit to mention, that he received in July, this year, a present of fifty scudi, from Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Lord of Guastalla, a very great admirer of, and proficient in, Italian poetry. For this sum the receipt of the poet is still extant.*

Second marriage of Tasso's sister.

Among the other events of 1581, was the marriage of Cornelia Tassa, sister of our bard, with John Ferrante Speziano. Of this circumstance, she gave an account to her brother, and invited him (rather preposterously, considering

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and shuddering of travellers. The hospital of St Anne, too, must have shared the general desolation of Ferrara: where the once gay and magnificent palace has now the appearance of a damp and dreary dungeon.

"Your remarks, (replied Mr Walker,) in regard to the apartment in which Tasso was confined at St Anne's, are very just. He was probably only confined to the dungeon, which I describe, when Alphonso's wrath was at its greatest height, or when, as you observe, a system of coercion was thought necessary."

* Serassi, p. 311. See, for an eulogy on this nobleman, Crescimbeni, *Storia della Volgar Poesia*, vol. III. lib. 2. p. 129.

his situation,) in her own and husband's name, to Naples. Torquato returned a very polite answer, complimenting her on the looks of her husband; telling her that, being a prisoner, it was not in his power to visit her at Naples; and at the same time exhorting her to use all her endeavours for his deliverance. "Perhaps," says he, "the nature of my imprisonment, and the inhumanity with which I am treated, is known neither to the Duke of Ferrara nor to the Duchess of Urbino.... I have written frequently from this prison to the Grand Duke of Tuscany, and to the Cardinal of Medici, beseeching them to restore me to my first state, (I say not with the Duke of Ferrara, but with any other prince,) and to the facilities I had of obtaining good fortune."* This was certainly chusing ill his intercessors, and could only have the effect of prolonging his confinement. From Maurice Cataneo, secretary of the Cardinal Albano, Torquato at this period received a kind letter, persuading him, in that prelate's name, to be patient, and cautioning him especially to speak and write of Alphonso with more respect.† This

* *Opere*, vol IX. p. 138.

† In a letter to Cardinal Albano, Tasso thus expresses himself on this subject: "I shall, not only from natural inclination, but in obedience also to the advice of your Cataneo, write always, and speak with all honour of the Duke of Ferrara: and, if Count Hercules shall communicate to your lordship the copy of a book *On Nobility*, which I gave to the Prince of Mantua, you will see that I write no otherwise of his highness and of his house, than becomes a most devoted servant. In the same manner, I write in another *Of Dignity*, which I would send to your lordship, if I knew a mode. This much with regard to the counsel on the subject of the Duke of Ferrara." &c.

Our poet apologises, in the following affecting manner, for his attacks upon Alphonso, in a note from the hospital, to the steward Coccapani: "It was my desire once more to

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

epistle, likewise, informed him of the high success of his poem at Rome, and of the universal desire that he would finish as quickly as possible his tragedy of *Torrismondo*. To the first of these hints Torquato promised obedience; "but as to my tragedy," says he, "I have no inclination to finish it, as gloomy compositions are apt to disturb my mind. Melancholy in my disposition, both by nature and fortune, I ought, as you yourself exhort, to live as cheerful as I can, without, however, doing any thing dishonourable to my age or profession."

Tasso's diseased perceptions.

No temperament is so subject to ennui, as genius, when unemployed; and in order, in his solitude, to protect himself from this, Tasso seems to have studied daily, till his brain was stimulated, and almost inflamed to frenzy.* In fact, like other stimulants, that of intense study becomes at last necessary to the happiness of the individual. By this preternatural excitement, it is not improbable that some of the more delicate membranes of Tasso's brain were injured; and it is certain, that vivid, involuntary, and confused ideas, especially during the listening darkness, would be induced. The following letter of our poet gives a striking and melancholy picture of diseased perceptions, and morbidity of feeling: It

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beseech you to conduct me to the feet of the most Serene Duke of Ferrara, because every word that falls from my pen, that can displease him, gives me the most infinite sorrow. Of this, however, his highness may be assured, as of the most certain truth, that very frequently I am not master of myself: and, therefore, I hope that his princely mind will attribute my offences, not to my temper, but to my disease." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 238.

* *Opere*, IX. 354.

is dated October 18th, 1581, and addressed to Maurice Cataneo, who seems to have criticised some expression of Tasso.*

"Although I ought to desire more anxiously to be accounted good than learned; yet it cannot but affect me to be considered as ignorant. Indeed, if virtue be a science, and if, without science, there cannot be any perfect action, I ought as much to esteem the reputation of learning as that of goodness. Hence, if it shall please God, I shall endeavour to remove from the minds of men that opinion, which, either through the malignity of others, or my own misfortune, I believe, is spread abroad of me. But because at present it is not in my power to banish this wholly, I shall content myself at this time with relating the disturbances I receive in study, and in writing. Know, then, that these are of two sorts, human and diabolical. The human are laughter full of derision, and shouts of men, and youths, but especially of women; and various cries of animals, which are harrassed by men to disquiet me; and noises of things inanimate, which are moved by the hands of men. The diabolical are enchantments and witchcraft; but of the enchantments I am not certain, as the rats, of which the chamber is full, and which seem to me possessed of the devil, may naturally occasion the noise they do, and not merely by diabolical art. Some other sounds also, which I hear, may be referred, as to their origin, to human artifice. But, whatever may be thought

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 268.

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

of the enchantments, I hold it to be certain that I have been bewitched, and that the operations of the witchcraft are very powerful. For, whenever I take a book to study, or a pen to write, I hear the sound of voices in my ear, in which I can, as it were, distinguish the names of Pavolo, of Giacomo, of Girolamo, of Francesco, of Fulvio, and others, who, perhaps, are malignant persons, and envious of my quiet. And if they be not such, they would act courteously if they would endeavour to remove the bad opinion of them which I have conceived on account of their evil arts. At that time, also, more than any other, many vapours ascend to my head, although very often I write before eating, so that, in short, my ideas are exceedingly disturbed. It is no wonder, therefore, if writing to your cardinal, [Albano,] I used improperly the term *Instruments of Knowledge*, or if I have written some other things in an incongruous manner. And if it happens, that, with these external impediments, internal ones, as often is the case, concur, I am excited to extreme rage, so that often I do not end my letters, but tear them, and again transcribe; and this I have done with the present, of which I have torn and recommenced many copies. Some others I send off, such as they issue from my hands, written for the first time, and very quickly; so that, if in these I have committed any error, it ought by the courteous reader to be considered rather as the error of a perturbed than of an ignorant man. Nor only the letters which I write, but my other compositions also, have been composed with the same perturbation of mind; so that I will never affirm that they are

good, nor even confess that they are mine, till I shall have leisure to review them. Certainly not those which have been produced by a disquieted soul, but such as have been the offspring of an unclouded intellect, are to be regarded as my compositions; and, besides, some of them have not been written with what I consider good art, from many causes, which, if I live, I shall on some other occasion explain at length. Such was a discourse, which, two years ago, I sent to the emperor; and some others which I wrote to the most serene Duchess of Mantua, and to Sig. Scipio Gonzaga. As to these, I had not been able to give a rhetorical form, I have been thinking, this last year, to extend into many orations, the proofs of the many agonies I have suffered, the many wrongs I have received, and the nature of my errors, which did not deserve the punishment of which my enemies thought them worthy; and which, indeed, are, perhaps, less culpable than their own. But, terrified by the labour, and by the obstacles which presented themselves, I ceased to write on this subject; or, rather, I delayed it till a more proper opportunity. The heads or divisions, which then suggested themselves, have now wholly escaped my recollection; for my memory, in this my infirmity, is greatly weakened.* Indeed I shall not be able to recollect

* The memory of Tasso, which had been exceedingly powerful, was the first of his faculties that was greatly impaired by his distemper. Being that too, the loss of which he could least disguise to himself, he complains of it most bitterly, and is continually requesting a remedy from his physicians. *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 98, 258. X. 360, &c. "So-

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1581. Aet. 37.

them without the strongest efforts of reminiscence, and, perhaps, I may form different divisions. But should your lord, who has always counselled me so prudently, should he be of opinion that I ought rather to forget the injuries I have inflicted and received, than, by writing, renew them in my own memory, and that of others, I shall readily draw a veil over what is past. I pray that my reputation and my quiet may be recommended to that illustrious cardinal; and I await his counsel, without which I am unwilling to take any resolution. And, in order that, in giving it, he may be secure of what I dare promise for myself, let him know that, when I am not perplexed by so many noises, (which even now, while I write, have by no means ceased, and which are such as might render insane a person of the soundest understanding,) when I shall not be perplexed by these, and when, after the use of cathartics, I shall be nourished with such food as

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leva, (says he, in a letter, Oct. 2, 1583,) rade volte por mano alla penna come colui, che riteneva nella mente trecento e quattrocento stanze per volta, ed ora appena posso ricordarmi d'un Sonetto; e s'egli non è fatto molto di fresco, me ne dimentico in tutto." Some years afterwards, he complains that his memory was almost lost, *quasi perduta*, IX. 139, 145, and again that it was *perduta affatto*, lost altogether, *Ibid*, 419.

Shakespeare, (says Haslam, *Observations on Madness*, &c. p. 61. Ed. 1809,) Shakespeare, the highest authority in every thing relating to the human mind and its affections, seems to be persuaded that some defect of memory is necessary to constitute madness:—

> "It is not madnesse
> That I have uttered; bring me to the test,
> And I the matter will *re-word*, which madnesse
> Would gambol from."
>
> *Hamlet*, Act III. Scene 4.

does not increase the melancholy humour, I do not distrust my ability to exercise the office of secretary. Indeed, I am very certain that I should transcribe very few letters, or, if it were necessary to write any of them again, I should not need to do so more than once. I do not seek, however, to exercise this office. But if I could obtain half of two thousand five hundred scudi, which I may justly claim in the kindom of Naples,* and of one thousand and more, of which Sig. * * may be considered as my debtor, since so many must have been derived from the editions I have seen of my poem; if I could obtain these, I would think of nothing but my studies; and this not so much from the hope of glory, as from the desire of quiet. God grant that, at all events, this may be my portion, and so I kiss your hands.†

* About this time, Tasso's sister had written to him, that it was probable he might recover the dowry of his mother, which he here alludes to, and which was a subject of anxious expectation to the poet till the close of his life. *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 5, 93, 138, 244, X. 262.

† This Sig. * * appears to have been Cornelio Bentivoglio, to whose charge the papers of Tasso seem to have been committed. This is rendered probable by a letter of our poet to a son of Cornelio, dated St Anne's, the 25th of March, 1581. "Io ho veduta Stampata una parte del mio Poema: e sapendo d'averlo lasciato tutto in casa di V. S. ho sospettato, che non possa esser' uscito, se non dalle sue mani. Ma pur non dovendo affermar se non quel, ch'io so, me ne debbo rimettere alla sua coscienza." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 308. The letter is very elegant and pathetic; "A me pare (says Tasso,) che l'illustriss: Sig. Cornelio, padre di V. S. dovesse esser più ricordevole dell' antica mia affezione, e del desiderio, ch'io aveva di servirlo, che d'alcuna nuova ingiuria, ch'io le abbia fatta; perciocchè questa non è stata affatto volontaria, ove quella fu sempre in me, non tanto per inclinazion naturale, ch'io ho agli uomini di valore, quanto anco per elezione e per fermo proponimento. Ma se sua Signoria vuol pure con animo inacerbito ricordarsene; non dee almen dimenticarsi, come Cavaliero, nè dee pensare ad alcun discomodo d'un povero gentiluomo come son' Io."

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1582. Aet. 38.

The principal event relative to Tasso, in the year 1582, and which seems worthy of mention, was the publication of his *Rime*, corrected by Guarini. The first part of these had been published by the younger Aldus, in the preceding, and both parts this year; but in a manner very incorrect. Guarini was by no means on good terms with our poet, and, as it would seem, never visited him at St Anne's; but he admired his talents, and pitied his misfortunes. On the other hand, Tasso had a great opinion of the taste of his opponent; and, in his dialogue of the *Messenger*, praises highly his talents for business, his literature, and eloquence.* When the first mutilated edition of the *Jerusalem* was published, Guarini, indignant that a poem so noble should appear in a manner so maimed and miserable, had corrected the text, filled up the interstices, and seems to have designed his labour for publication, had he not been prevented by the appearance of more perfect editions.† From a similar motive, he appears to have taken charge of the *Rime*, as he tells us that he could not see, without compassion, the wretched editions of Aldus.‡ This learned printer being at Ferrara in September, this year, waited on the bard, requesting him to furnish a sonnet, to ornament his Life of

Tasso's rhymes are corrected by Guarini.

* Ne meno porrò in oblivione il Sig. Battista Guarino, che la prudenza civile ha accoppiata con tanto ornamento di scelte e polite lettere, e di felicissima eloquenza, quanto basta a farsi conoscere per singolare. *Opere*, vol. VII. p. 131.

† *Opere*, del Tasso, vol. I. p. 398.

‡ *Lettere*, p. 141. Ed. Ciotti, 1615.

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1582, Aet. 38.

Cosmo de Medici, and he promised in future to print Tasso's works in a correct, as well as elegant manner. As the fame of our poet was continually increasing, he received a number of visits, with a particular account of which I shall not occupy the attention of my reader. Several of his visitors were persons of considerable literary eminence; but I observe among them none whose fame has extended beyond that country "which Appenine divides, and the Alps surround and the sea."*

Tasso's dialogue, Gonzaga, or of Honest Pleasure.

In the meanwhile the printers eagerly published the prose works of Tasso, and sent him, on all sides, solicitations for manuscripts.† In 1583 was printed, by Vasalini, a dialogue, entitled, *Gonzaga, or of Honest Pleasure*, which, if not the cause, was at least the pretext, of much persecution from the literati of Florence. In this work, which was written in imitation of the *Phaedrus* of Plato, Tasso introduces two orations, supposed to be spoken before the Prince of Salerno, at the time when he was deliberating whether he should accept the embassy to the emperor, committed to him by the city of Naples.‡ The one of these is represented

* I know not whether I ought to distinguish from the others Manfredi, author of *Semiramide*, a tragedy, much praised by Maffei, [*Teatro Italiano*, tom. II. Verona, 1723.—See too Walker's *Historical Memoir*, &c. 126.] Manfredi, in a letter dated the first of January, 1583, says, Visitai il Tasso... ed è assai in cervello. From some letters of Tasso to Horace Lombardelli, written in 1582, and relating principally to the title of his poem, it appears that he retained all that critical acumen, by which he was supremely distinguished. *Opere*, vol. X. p. 165, et seq. See too *Ibid*, p. 276, a letter to Cataneo.

† *Opere*, vol. X. p. 278. A. B. Giunti,—Al Manucci MS. ap Serassi.

‡ Vol. I. p. 19, of this work.

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1583. Aet. 39.

as pronounced by Bernardo Tasso, father of the poet; the other by Vincenzo Martelli, majordomo. of the duke, who, in fact, dissuaded him from that unfortunate undertaking. * It seems difficult to explain, and has not been accounted for, why Torquato should have fixed on a subject which recalled to memory the little foresight of his father, and a counsel which (as has been shewn in the first volume of this book,) might be considered as the source of its adviser's misfortunes, and of the ruin of the prince his master. The wonder is increased, if we consider that the opinions, both of Martelli and of Bernardo, had, twenty years before, been given to the world, in that epistolary form in which they had been communicated to Sanseverino. Besides, it may be doubted whether the sentiments put into the mouth of Martelli are either altogether congruent with those he entertained, or adapted very justly to the circumstances of the case. † Perhaps the following remark may be considered as explanatory of the motives by which Torquato was actuated. At this period some hope dawned upon him of recovering the dowry of his mother, and the property of his father, which had been confiscated at Naples. His dialogue is de-

* See in *Lettere di* Bernardo Tasso, ed. Comino, vol. I. p. 570, the real address of Martelli to San. Severino, (extracted from his letters by Giunti, p. 84, 1563, in 4to.) and that of Bernardo in p. 564 of the same volume. These two learned men had a violent quarrel on the subject, (*ibid*, p. 574, *et seq.*) in which Bernardo does not seem to have the advantage. His letter to the Prince of Salerno, is that of a rhetorician; that of Martelli, of a statesman and man of the world.

† *Opere*, vol. III. p. 466.

dicated to the courts of justice and people of that city; and he seems to have had the purpose of recalling to memory, that his father had suffered in forwarding a transaction which they had anxiously desired. As it entered into his plan to extol the city of Naples, he unfortunately chose Homer for his model, who, when he wishes to bring forward a hero, does it at the expence of all the rest. Torquato exhibits Martelli as entering into a discussion on the grandeur of his native Florence, evidently for the purpose of allowing Bernardo to expatiate on the magnificence of Naples, which he represents as a baronial city; while Florence is described by him as a manufactory of weavers and artificers.* At the first appearance of this dialogue, Urbani, the ambassador of the Grand Duke at Ferrara, wrote, with an intention of irritating that prince against our poet, as Martelli, who was a Florentine exile, is there represented as using some harsh expressions relative to the family of Medici. "If I had chosen," says he, "to bow my neck to the new tyranny of the house of Medici, some place of favour or authority at Florence would not have been denied to my industry; as they wish, in appearance, to seem just and magnanimous princes." The grand duke, however, (who perceived that no argument of the disposition of a person can be founded on the sentiments which the truth of representation compels him to put into the mouths of his *dramatis personæ*,) very wisely took

* *Opere*, vol. III. p. 434. How anxious Torquato was that this dialogue should be distributed at Naples, the court of the emperor, and in Spain, appears, vol. IX. p. 209.

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1583. Aet. 39.

no notice of the matter. Indeed, the expressions used by Martelli, are ridiculed by Bernardo in a subsequent part of the dialogue. "I cannot (says he) contemplate, without laughter, the arrogance of this new Cato, and Marcellus, who cannot, forsooth! support the sight of a tyrant. Martello disdains to serve the house of Medici! Martello, oh, good God! disdains, I say, to serve the house of Medici, which so many lords of Lombardy and Italy scruple not to obey." *

With regard to the indisposition of our poet, the following document remains, which deprives his admirers of the consolation of thinking that he was altogether liberated either from his bodily or his mental malady. In summer, 1583, finding himself extremely ill, he wrote a particular account of the symptoms of his disorder to the celebrated Jerome Mercuriale, professor of medicine in the university of Padua. "It is some years," says he, "most illustrious sir! that I have been infirm of a disease, of which I know not the cause; however, I hold it very certain that I have been bewitched. But whatever may have been the cause of my distemper, the following are the effects: a gnawing of the intestines, with something of a dysentery; tinklings in my ears and head, so strong sometimes as if a clock were included in it. Besides, the continual phantasy of various things, and all of them disagreeable, disturbs me in such a

Symptoms of his malady.

* *Opere*, vol. VII. p. 311, Serassi, p. 323.

manner, that I cannot, even for the space of four minutes, apply my mind to study. Indeed, the more intent I wish to be, the more I am distracted by various imaginations, and sometimes by violent passions, which are suddenly kindled in me, according to the nature of the phantasies which spring up in me. Besides, always after eating, my head fumes beyond measure, and is heated prodigiously; and in every noise I hear, my fancy imagines some human voice, so that even things inanimate appear to speak. At night I am disturbed by various dreams; and sometimes my imagination so carries me away, that I seem to have heard (if I may not rather say I have heard,) certain things, which I have conferred with Father Marco, a capuchin, the bearer of this letter, and with other fathers and laity, with whom I have discoursed of my distemper. * You will see that my disease, being not only great, but dreadful beyond all others, has need of a powerful remedy; and though there can be no better remedy than the grace of God, who never abandons those that firmly trust in him, yet, as his infinite mercy allows us also, who are men, to have recourse to human means, I apply, most excellent sir, to you for aid and counsel. If you cannot (as I wish) send me any medicines, I beseech you at least to write me your advice, which I have al-

* In the works of Tasso, vol. IX. pp. 273, 321, are three letters addressed to this capuchin; from which we learn nothing, but that he seems to have been a hypocrite, who pretended to have received a revelation from God of the secrets of our poet. There is a beautiful recommendatory letter of Tasso concerning this person, *Opere*, vol. X. p. 362.

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1583. Aet. 39.

ways held in the greatest esteem, and to which I would more willingly submit than to that of any other. And, sir, the greater my need and my infelicity, the greater will be my obligations to you, if, by your means, I shall recover my health. To conclude; though not only in respect of health, but in every thing else, I may say that I am in a dreadful condition; yet, by the grace of God, so much of my wonted talent still remains, that I am not yet quite unfit for composition; and, in this way, you may expect from me all sorts of gratitude. If there be any recompence which you can or ought to look for from me, it is that of praise; a praise which will not only be willingly paid, when demanded, but often bestowed spontaneously. It will give me great pleasure, likewise, to hear the opinion of Sig. Melchior Guilandino, and that you would recommend me to Sig. John Vincenzo Pinello, for whom I have had a long and warm affection. So I kiss your hands. From Ferrara, on the vigil of St Peter, 1583." *

Mercuriale hastened to send Torquato his opinion, advising him to a cautery in the leg, to abstain entirely from wine, and to drink only broth. He added that he would soon send a receipt for a conserve which would sweeten his blood, and settle the fumes, so as they might not rise to his head. Our poet, as we have seen, was not very docile to physicians; and he particularly detested every remedy of which the ef-

* Serassi, p. 324.

fect was painful, or the taste disagreeable. From a letter, written by him to a friend of Mercuriale, on the first of October, 1583, it appears, that he had submitted to none of the prescriptions: "I have seen," says he, "his opinion which he has sent me in writing; and willingly would I be let blood, and suffer, as he counsels, another cautery in the arm. But as to having one in the leg, and abstinence from wine, which he commands me, these are remedies which would be quite insupportable. I mean total abstinence, and drinking broth always; for, as to drinking little wine, and being temperate, I could submit to that without difficulty. . . . If you can procure the receipt for the conserve which Sig. Mercuriale wishes me to take, I would be infinitely obliged to you. The more agreeable it is to the taste, I shall value it the more; because the excellence of medical men greatly consists, as you well know, in giving not only wholesome, but agreeable medicines. Inform Sig. Mercuriale that I am very infirm, and, though I eat with a good appetite, am, in other respects, languid and sickly." *

To some of my readers, it would appear, perhaps, charitable in his biographer, to draw a veil over the afflicting situation of this mighty genius. This would be true, if I wrote so particularly of his distemper, merely to gratify an idle curiosity; but it may not be without its use to medical men, to know the species of alienation to which so astonishing a

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 360.

CHAP. XVI.
A. D. 1583. Aet. 39.

mind became a victim. When unmerited calamities afflict a man, worthy of esteem for his virtues, and admiration for his genius, such calamities can only have the effect of rendering him more dear and interesting. Indeed, I cannot at all perceive the use of Biography, unless it gives a perfect portrait of him who is the subject of its pencil. Let us sigh over the faults, let us be afflicted at the sufferings of those who have astonished mankind by their deeds, or by their writings; but, if we are resolved to narrate the incidents of their lives, let us not destroy, by concealment, the value of a kind of composition, at once the most interesting and most instructive to our species.

In the course of this year, 1583, a critic paid to Torquato a similar compliment to what Maphaeus Vegius had paid to Virgil. This was, that, though his poem was very fine, it was imperfect, and needed an addition; which the said critic was perfectly adequate to supply. Camillo Camilli, (this charitable and consequential personage,) published, this year, five additional cantos to the *Jerusalem Delivered*, both separately and united to a beautiful edition of that poem. The design of these supplementary cantos is so wretched, and the execution so miserable, that Tasso seems to have viewed them with great indifference. * What is certain is, that there is no truth in a tale which has been told on this subject, that our poet, enraged at the impertinence of Ca-

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 364.

milli, went expressly to Venice for the purpose of fighting him. Camilli, as the story tells, had, in addition to his talents for poetry, a considerable portion of prudence, and not being so eager for a trial of fencing, as of wit, with his illustrious rival, received a number of blows with great meekness. * Nothing but truth is wanting to the merit of this story. At the time when Camillo published his work, Tasso was confined at Ferrara; nor was he ever at Venice after his deliverance. Even though he had been there, it is doubtful if he would have met his continuator, as, soon after his Herculean exertion, that great poet had been appointed professor of humanity by the republic of Ragusa. †

* *Querelles Litteraires*, &c. [by the Abbé Israilh,] "La bravoure étoit son partage. [de Tasse.] Il en avoit déjà fait preuve vis-à-vis d'un certain Camillo Camilli, qu'il alla trouver exprès a Venise pour l'y défier en un combat singulier, parceque celuici, s'imaginant que la *Jerusalem* n'etoit point finie, barbouilla cinq chants, aux quels il donna le titre de continuation de ce poeme. Camilli craignoit si fort de se mesurer avec une des meilleures épées de son temps, qu'il aima mieux se laisser charger de coups par le Tasse que d'accepter le cartel et de se battre... Le procédé violent de l'auteur de la *Jerusalem* lui eût couté cher, si les senateurs de Venise, en consideration de son grand mérite n'eussent cru devoir lui pardonner."—Tom. IV. p. 192.

† "Cosa (says Serassi, reciting the story of the beating which Camilli received from Tasso,) che non può sussistere assolutamente, giacchè nel tempo che il Camilli pubblicò questa sua giunta Torquato si trovava prigione in Ferrara, nè dappoi che fu posto in libertà, il che avvenne, come vedremo, nel 1586, egli fu mai più a Venezia, e quando pure vi fosse stato, non poteva più incontrarsi nel Camilli, il quale era già molto prima partito per Ragugia, chiamatovi da quella republica per professore di lettere umane."

"Che il Camilli (Serassi adds in a note,) fosse professore d'umane lettere in Ragusa, si ha dal P. D. Angelo Grillo. *Lettere*, p. 144; che poi vi si trovasse appunto l'anno 1586, si ricava da una lettera di Tommaso Costo, a lui scritta a Ragugia da Napoli a' 4. di Settembre di quell' anno."—*Vita del Tasso*, p. 327.

Among the letters, however, of Aldus Manutius, are three addressed to Camillo Camilli *at Venice*. The first of these is dated on the day of St Jerome, 1587, the second on the twenty-first of June, 1588, the third on the sixth of May, 1589.

CHAP. XVI.

A. D. 1584. Aet. 40.

In the succeeding year, a number of applications were made to Alphonso for the deliverance of Tasso; and one day he made that poet be called, and, in presence of several French and Italian cavaliers, spoke to him with much courtesy, and promised him in a short while his liberty. * As a pledge, as it were, of this promise, the duke ordered that his confinement should be less limited; and that sometimes he might go abroad, accompanied, however, by some gentleman of his acquaintance. He was allowed to visit different churches and monasteries, † and at times, it would seem, to be even of the parties of several people of quality. As his principal amusement during his confinement was writing dialogues in prose, he perpetuated in these the memory of the persons with whom he associated, and the favours which he received. Of these, written at this period, are, *Il Beltramo, or of Courtesy; Il Malpiglio, or of the Court; La Cavaletta, or of Tuscan Poetry; Il Ghirlinzone, or of the Epitaph.* ‡

At the time of the carnival, the friends of Tasso conducted him to see the masquerades, a kind of amusement of

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 250. He seems to have been frequently promised liberty; vol. X. p. 287, "Il Sereniss. Duca di Ferrara, e le Sereniss. Sigl. Duchesse, (writes he, twenty-fourth August, 1583,) m'abbiano usate assai cortesi parole, e facciano fatti, per gli quali Io possa sperare di racquistare intieramente le grazie delle loro Altezza."—Vol. X. p. 284.

† *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 57, 59; X. p, 365. The liberty of going abroad was for a considerable time taken from him, on account of his having, on one occasion, refused to return to the hospital; IX. p. 39.

‡ *Opere*, vol. VI. p. 462; VII. 24, 503; III. p. 69.

which he had been always extremely fond. * He still, too, saw with pleasure the jousts and tournaments, where throngs of knights and barons appeared in all the splendour of Gothic pomp and antique pageantry. Of the masquerades at this carnival, he has preserved the memory in a dialogue, entitled, *Il Gianluca, or of Masques;* written in compliment to Sig. Ippolito Gianluca, who took him at times from prison, † and had accompanied him to these divertisements. ‡ Tasso seems to have been very busy, at this period, in the composition of dialogues; one of which, entiled, *Il Rangone, or of Peace*, he, on the thirteenth of July, 1584, sent, with an elegant dedication, to the Duchess of Tuscany. || Such compositions, while they interposed some ease amidst his misfortunes, § were, no doubt, better fitted to allay the violence of morbid irritability than poetical exertion. In this the fancy is of necessity kindled into a sort of transport, or passionate emotion; and that faculty is em-

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* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 3; IX. p. 210. † *Ibid.* vol. IX. p. 361; X. 297.

‡ This, and the circumstance of Tasso's visiting at the houses of different persons of rank this year, rest chiefly on the dubious authority of introductions to dialogues; which, though sometimes founded on real incidents, (vol. IX. p. 333,) may as often be fabulous. That he was present at the masquerades, however, is, I think, very evident from *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 339, 391; X. p. 317. Indeed, so early as January, 1580, a mask and habit were sent him by H. Coccapani, vol. IX. p. 210; but it is doubtful if, at that period, he was ever permitted to quit the hospital.

|| *Opere*, vol. X. p. 318. He also at this time corrected three volumes of prose and poetry, two of which he sent, on the fifteenth October, 1584, to Scipio Gonzaga to have them printed, IX. p. 421.

§ Vol. IX. p. 531. Quello che accresce la malinconia è la difficoltà del far versi: e se i dialoghi non m'ajutano son quasi disperato.

CHAP. XVI.

A. 1548. Æt. 40.

ployed, and strengthened, which, by tyrannizing over the other powers of the mind, is productive of delirium. Whatever, therefore, tends to render the affections of the mind more vivid; whatever ardently excites the imagination, while the judging faculty lies dormant or subdued; love that is ungovernable, or poetry that is warm; these should be avoided, as exciting causes of that mental alienation to which they are analogous.

The lunatic, the poet, and the lover,
Are of imagination all compact. *

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* *Midsummer Night's Dream.* Tasso himself says, "Chi ha più bisogno de'fantasmi che'l poeta? o qual fu mai buon poeta, in cui la virtù immaginatrice non fosse gagliarda? e che altro è il furor poetico, che un ratto, che l'immaginazione fa di noi:" X. p. 192.

CHAPTER XVII.

Controversy of the Academy Della Crusca with Tasso—Comparative Merit of that Poet and of Ariosto.

A. D. 1584—1585.
Aet. 40—41.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1584.
Aet. 40.

At the first publication of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, Envy, like a serpent upon which one has trod, lay for some time stunned and astonished; she now, however, recovered, unclosed her fangs, and collected her venom,

The poem of Tasso, though composed under auspicious circumstances, appeared, in some measure, at an inauspicious period. In the same city, and at the same court, Ariosto had sung with an ease, a fancy, and exuberance, of which there had been scarcely an example in any former age. His *Orlando* had been published in its complete state, about fifty years before the poem of our bard; a period sufficient to give it a kind of classical dignity, and to diffuse it universally, but

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1584. Aet. 40.

yet not so distant as to prevent the *Jerusalem* from being considered as a rival production. If, from an examination of the circumstances of the works, we turn to that of the authors, we shall find that, as far as fame was concerned, the state of the new Homer of Ferrara was much less favourable than that of the old. The ear of Ariosto had long been deaf to praise, while Tasso, unhappy as he was, might still have received pleasure, or at least consolation, from renown. " If a picture," says D'Alembert, " were to be given of Envy, she might be depicted as with the one hand assassinating living, while with the other she is offering incense to departed genius."* The same affection of Envy for the dead, which springs only from hatred to the living, has been well painted by a poet, whose life was imbittered by critics, the displeasure of whom arose not from his faults, (though these were many,) but from his literary excellence.

La gît la sombre Envie, a l'oeil timide, et louche,
Versant sur des Lauriers les poisons de sa bouche;
Le jour blesse ses yeux, dans l'ombre etincelans;
Triste Amante des morts, Elle hait les vivans.†

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* On pourroit, ce me semble, representer l'Envie egorgeant d'une main du Genie vivant, et de l'autre offrant de l'encens à un Genie qui n'est plus.

† *Henriade*, chant 7me. The well-known lines of Mr Lewis to Pope are, perhaps, the most beautiful that have been written on this subject; and have the rare merit of uniting sentiment with justness of reflection :—

While malice, Pope! denies thy page
Its own celestial fire;
While critics, and while bards, in rage,
Admiring, won't admire.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1584. Aet. 40.

As the controversy in Italy relative to the *Jerusalem Delivered*, was one of the most violent ever agitated in that country, as its relation is so intimate with the subject of this work, and as it offers a subject of consolation to those who, without the same merits as our poet, may be used with the same barbarity, I shall devote this chapter to an account of its rise and progress. An opportunity will be thus afforded me of offering some remarks on the relative merit of Tasso; nor may it be without its use to show malignity, that its efforts are at least as useless as they are base; that a day will come, in which, of all that has been written against a man of genius, that only shall remain to which he seemed sensible, or which will serve to add lustre to his glory. *

While wayward pens thy worth assail,
And envious tongues decry;
These times, though many a friend bewail,
Bewail them will not I.

But when the world's loud praise is thine,
And spleen no more shall blame;
When with thy Homer thou shalt shine
In one unclouded fame;

When none shall rail, and every lay
Devote a wreath to thee;
That day, (for come it will,) that day
Shall I lament to see.

* Cardan, in his life, has a long chapter, *De Amicis atque Patronis;* and then a short one, *De Inimicis et aemulis.* "Non eandem," says he, "inibo rationem, in ennarandis nominibus Inimicorum aut aemulorum, tam studiosè ut amicorum: quippe Galenum non parum errasse puto, qui Thessalum dum nomen ejus proterit, aliquem esse docuerit: et

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1584. Aet 40.

Among the warmest admirers of Tasso, were two literary gentlemen of Capua, John Battista Attendolo, and Camillo Pellegrino; who, observing that the *Jerusalem* is at once regular and delightful, did not hesitate to pronounce it greatly superior to the *Orlando Furioso*. Whether excited by the opposition he met with, or tired of always beating the same ground, Pellegrino resolved to compose a dialogue on the subject. His interlocutors are his friend Attendolo, and D. Lewis Carrafa, Prince of Stigliano, in compliment to whom the dialogue was entitled, *Carrafa, or of Epic Poetry.*

Dialogue of Pellegrino.

A subject so interesting as the dethronement of Ariosto gave publicity to this work; it was frequently copied, and met every where opponents and defenders. Hearing at last that it was about to be sent to the press, (though deformed by the haste of transcribers,) Pellegrino himself determined to print it. For this purpose he sent a copy to Scipio Ammirato at Florence, and the dialogue was published in that city on the first of November, 1584.

The literati of Florence were in general prejudiced against Tasso, both on account of his patron, and from other considerations. I have already mentioned the rivalship with regard to precedence, which had existed between the courts of

Prejudices of the literati of Florence against Tasso.

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cujus rationem haberet," cap. XVI. The attacks of Tasso's enemies, are now only to be found in the collection of that poet's works; and the memory of the greater part of them would have perished, had he not given them, by his notice of them, that notoriety which they sought.

Tuscany and Ferrara; and the offence which had been taken at the indifferent treatment of Lucretia de' Medici, first wife of Alphonso. The literary jealousy has also been remarked, which existed between the two families; and the preponderance which the works of Tasso, with those of his great predecessor, gave to that of Este. Ariosto, however, besides the important circumstance of being dead, had greatly admired Florence; and had celebrated that city in a poem remarkable for its beauty.* Tasso, as we have seen, had acted differently in his *Dialogue of Honest Pleasure;* so as not only to have (though innocently) given offence to the Tuscan ambassador, but also to the Florentines, by wounding their vanity. This circumstance was used as an apology by the members of the academy of Crusca; when, by their cruel and injurious behaviour to our poet, they had excited a very general indignation and contempt.

To these, which may be termed public, were added some private grudges. The leader of the academy, and the person who attacked the dialogue of Pellegrino, was Lionardo Salviati, a man of considerable learning and acuteness of mind.† At the time of the revision of his poem at Rome,

Salviati.

* A copy of this poem may be found among the *Opere di Tasso,* vol. III. p. 448. It is the 9th of Ariosto's Elegies.

† Salviati was a particular friend of Guarini, and dedicated to him the second volume of his work on the *Decamerone.* A letter of thanks for this, and a request that he would look over and correct the style of the MS. of the *Pastor Fido,* was written by Guarini at Ferrara, April, 1586. "Io vorrei," says Guarini, "esser discepolo in vita, per esser maestro dopo la morte." See *Lettere di* Guarini, p. 233.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1584. Aet. 40.

this critic wrote a letter to Tasso, telling him that he had seen some cantos which he greatly admired; and offering, if the *Jerusalem* were submitted to his perusal, to make honourable mention of it, in a commentary which he was about to publish on the *Poetics*. * This offer, which seems to have been made by Salviati, for the purpose of embellishing his own work, was not accepted by Tasso, at least in the extent that was desired. "If it were not (wrote he to Horace Capponi, a common friend of our poet, and of Salviati,) if it were not want of time, and some other circumstances, I would send him my poem, not so much from the desire of praise, as the utility I might hope from his criticism; but in order that I may not appear lightly to esteem the offer which you seem to make me in his name, and at the same time not to

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 117. It is in a letter of Tasso, to Scipio Gonzaga, dated Ferrara 27th July, 1576, that this account is given. "Il Cavalier Salviati, gentiluomo de' più letterati di Fiorenza, che ora fa stampare un suo comento sovra la *Poetica*, a questi giorni passati mi scrisse una lettera molto cortese, nella quale, mostrando d'aver veduti alcuni miei canti, mi lodava assai sovra i meriti miei....Ho conferito seco alcune mie opinioni, e mandatoli la favola del mio poema, largamente distesa con gli episodj. L'ha lodata assai, e concorre nella mia opinione, che in questa lingua sia necessaria maggiore copia d'ornamenti, che nella Latina, e nella Greca....S'è offerto ancora di fare nel suo comento onorevolissima menzione del mio poema: se'l farà, l'avrò caro. Nel disegno, e nella verisimilitudine pare a lui, che nulla si possa aggiungere o migliorare." This commentary on Aristotle was never published; and probably its author did not think its interest increased by the refusal of Tasso to communicate to him his beautiful unpublished poem, in order that he might select from it whatever he thought might serve his purpose.

Lombardelli, another of Tasso's antagonists, (under the person of a frigid advocate) was at one period a most enthusiastic admirer of that poet, but became his enemy, because Tasso did not concur with him in opinion about the title of his poem. See *Opere*, vol. X. p. 165. *et seq.* also 276. and vol. III. p. 197. X. 151.

defraud myself of a great honour, and of a great pleasure, (provided he esteems my poem not unworthy of honourable mention) I shall send him the fable, as I cannot send him the poem. Nor shall this fable be abridged in a few words, as Aristotle has done the Odyssey, but shall be so large as to take notice even of the episodes. I know, however, that, by sending the naked story, I shall considerably lessen that good opinion which he seems to have of me; for, in endeavouring to please others in the fable and episodes, I have not entirely satisfied myself, who am possessed of a taste rather severe than otherwise. In the sentiments, however, in the costume, in the elocution, and in the touching the affections, I will not deny that I have done less displeasure to my judgment."

To the grudge, which was probably conceived against Tasso on the above account, interested motives seem to have been joined. Salviati was always extremely poor; *fu sempre*, says Serassi, *un ristretto, e poverissimo gentiluomo*. As he was at this time desirous of some provision at Ferrara, he probably thought that he would pay it a compliment, by exalting a native of that city above a stranger and a prisoner. He believed, perhaps, that Tasso was disliked and deserted by Alphonso; and, at any rate, that he would please some of the persons who had the greatest influence at the court of this prince. If we consider the language of the production of Salviati, and the manner of its publication, such a supposition is by no means uncharitable, though it gives a detestable picture of the heart of this Zoilus. As to its lan-

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1584. Aet. 40.

guage, it was full of intemperate scurrility and illiberal banter, without the least portion of that attic irony, or elegance of wit, which sometimes almost renders asperity pardonable. As to the mode of publication, Salviati dared not affix his own name to his performance; but, with a cowardice equal to his malice, availed himself of that of the academy of Crusca.

It was a general practice among the literati of Italy, to gather themselves into societies, for the purpose of conversation, and of reading to each other their poetical and other productions. These assemblies they distinguished by some quaint title; and every member was wont to assume some classical or other name; sometimes relating to the general designation of his academy; sometimes to what he conceived to be his own peculiar genius or character. In the year 1582, a few literary persons had formed themselves into a club, to which they gave the name of *Crusca*, or Bran, in conformity to which denomination, they took a sieve for their device. In the two succeeding years, they had published two small works; in which the charitable reader was forced to accept the attempt to be witty for the performance. The controversy with Tasso, however, raised them to eminence, as the monsters became celebrated which were subdued by the arm of Hercules.

Academy of Crusca.

The form which Salviati, or which (as they sanctioned his work with their name,) the academicians of Crusca gave to their first attack, was a republication of the dialogue of

Pellegrino, with comments, or glosses, interwoven.* It was published in the month of February, 1585; and, in order to appreciate the taste of the composition, it may not be improper to translate its preface. "Our academy, which, as is generally known, has been called *Crusca* (Bran) only because, by sifting, it separates the flour from the bran, † was lately assembled, at its usual place of meeting, in a considerable number. Learning from its steward, that, some days ago, a sack of flour had been left for the purpose of being sifted, it ordered the beadles to bring it forward for examination. A ticket bore that it was the property of Cammillo Pellegrino; and the sack being opened, and looked into by the censors, it was ordered that the weight and measure of

* The academy at this time seems to have been composed of very few persons, (six was the number in 1582,) not one of whom had any name in literature, excepting Salviati. Nor did the whole of these approve of the pasquinade against Tasso, but some of the more violent only, who took the sanction of the title. This appears from a letter written in the name of the academy by its secretary, Rondinelli, dated February 1, 1586. "Nelle contese, che vegghiano tra alcuni nostri Accademici *privatamente*, e'l Pellegrino, e Torquato Tasso; non permetterà l'Accademia quanto ella conoscerà, che essa fuor cosa per l'avvenire, che sia per iscemar l'ardore e l'affezione de' suoi partigiani, nè accrescere ardire a' contrari."

"I return you thanks (says Chapelain, in a letter to a friend,) for the sonnet which your indignation dictated at the academy's preference of Ariosto to Tasso. This judgment is overthrown by the confessions of many of the *Cruscanti*, my associates. To enter into its discussion would be tedious; but it was passion, and not equity, that prompted that decision."

† In Spenser, Book II. canto 4. st. 24. "He now had boulted all the floure," is used, for he had *sifted* the whole affair; and a similar phrase is used by Chaucer, "But I ne cannot boulte it to the brenne," (bran.) *Nonnes. Pr. T.* 1281, that is, I cannot examine it thoroughly. "Hence (says Mr Upton) comes *bolting*, an exercise of Gray's Inn, so named from sifting, or examining into some law points."

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

the contents should be taken and registered, together with the superscription. This being executed, the meal was passed through the bolter, in order to separate the bran. It is a privilege of this academy, that, when the flour is in smaller quantity than the bran, the former remains with the academy, while the latter returns to its master, and *vice versa*. In this case, not above one-fourth was meal, and it was accordingly confiscated for the use of the academy. Unfortunately, however, the small quantity of flour was of a bitterish taste, perhaps from the grain having been mixed with tares and lupines; so that the academicians would not allow it to be mixed with the rest, nor even to hold a nook in their granary. It was ordered to be exposed in the public market; and, at the same time, that no person might be cheated, the present placart was ordained to be affixed to it. With this I willingly comply, and warn all sensible people, that this meal is no crop of ours, and that its bitterness is such, as neither millstone nor sieve could remedy."

This buffoonery, which the Abbé de Charnes calls *le plus joli galimâtias du monde*, is, according to the same author, not quite in the taste of the ancients. The dialogue of Pellegrino, which was the subject of attack to these literary millers, is written with considerable taste and ability. He begins with observing, that it is more difficult to compose and embellish a poem on a subject which has an historical foundation, than one which is altogether dependent on the caprice of the inventor; and that a work, which consists of one great action, which all the diversities of incident promote,

is preferable to one that has a multiplicity, and disorder of actions. To the first of these remarks it was answered, that as Tasso had followed history, he had therefore no merit; and hardly even deserved the name of poet. Assuredly, however, when we read in Gibbon, that the author of the *Jerusalem* has copied the minutest details of the siege, * this increases to a high degree our admiration, that he has been able to bestow, without diminishing the likeness, the sublimity of ideal beauty on the coarse features of common nature. In fact, the whole charm, the whole difficulty of imitative art, is to better nature without destroying it. Tasso remarks in his *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*, that, after the poet has chosen a historical subject, he ought so to mould it as to render its events more dignified, or more delightful; and that general verisimilitude is upon the whole sufficient, without regard to particular truth. Thus Virgil has introduced the episode of Dido, for the double purpose of relieving by sweet conversations upon love, the severity of other events; and of assigning a remote and hereditary cause of enmity between the Carthaginians and the Romans. As in this case, he has contradicted chronology, so he has altered many other incidents, that he might adorn his *Eneid;* an aim which was much promoted by the antiquity of the times which he describes. "But (continues our poet) this licence of epic writers ought not to extend so far as to alter totally the conclu-

* *Decline and Fall,* &c. vol. VI. p. 59. 4to.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

sion of enterprises, or any of those principal events which are known to the world, and are commonly considered as true. It would be ridiculous to represent Rome as destroyed by Carthage, or Hannibal as vanquished in open battle by Fabius; an exhibition which would take from poetry all the authority she derives from history. Let the poet leave, in all their truth, the end and commencement of the enterprise, and some of the most illustrious actions; let him not alter them at all, or at least but little. But let him change, as seems good to him, the middle, and its circumstances; let him confound there the order of actions, or of time; and let him shew himself rather an artful poet than a true historian." * In conformity to this rule, Tasso (as has been remarked by Guastavini,) has taken from history the greater part of the materials of the three first cantos of his poem. Having thus acquired faith from his readers, by his attention to particular truth, he then bewitches their fancy by the wonders of his own creation; which unite to natural verisimilitude, the novelty and charm of magical illusion. In his three last cantos, he again recounts events with historical veracity; and thus leaves within the mind an acquiescence to the truth of all those enchanting incidents, and heroic deeds, which had successively soothed the imagination, and affected the heart. †

Mode of treating an historical subject poetically.

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* *Opere*, vol. V. p. 499.

† The principal historical guide of Tasso seems to have been William, Archbishop of Tyre; and he often himself mentions his strict adherence to what had been chronicled as

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

With regard to the multiplicity of actions, the academicians deny that the *Orlando Furioso* is a complex work, in opposition to the experience of every reader, and even to the affirmation of Ariosto himself, who tells us that he was at the same time weaving various webs, with various threads.*

Tasso compared with Ariosto.

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facts: "E certo (says he in a letter to Gonzaga,) tutto ciò, che si legge nel mio poema della colomba messagiera, dell' incendio, dell' apparizione dell' anime, è tolto di peso da Paolo Emilio, e Guglielmo Tirio, ed in ciascun altra parte di quel decimottavo, e decimo nono canto mi conformo assai coll' istoria," vol. X. p. 121.

From a letter, written on the 1st of July, 1589, it appears that Tasso had a wish (at least on that day) to be made Archbishop of Tyre, for the purpose of procuring him respect. "Almeno," says he, "M. Gasparro Ruspa mi ajutasse d'impetrare l'Arcivescovado di Tiro; perchè basterebbe il titolo a fare che gli uomini si vergognassero della loro indiscrezione," vol. IX. p. 535. This, however, was probably meant as a jest.

* Ma perchè varie fila a varie tele,
Uopo mi son, che tutte ordire intendo.

"I formerly attempted (says Beattie in one of his letters, *Life*, vol. II. p. 129. 4to.) to read Ariosto in his own Italian, but found him tedious, and could not endure the incoherence of the fable. I have conversed with Italians, and read critics on the subject, but never could see the reason of that preference which his countrymen give him to the correct, the classical, the delightful Tasso."

While I quote this passage, it may be proper to obviate a prejudice generally spread, that though foreigners, almost without exception, prefer Tasso, yet that it is otherwise in Italy. This notion could only have arisen from the disputes of the Crusca two centuries ago; for Tasso is much more generally admired in Italy than Ariosto, of which the translation of the *Jerusalem* into nine different Italian dialects affords a proof. "One would have expected (says the ingenious author of the *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. II. p. 148.) that Ariosto would have been the favourite of the people, and Tasso of the critics. I am assured by a native, that in Venice it is very common to hear the Gondoliers and others sing passages, which are generally taken from Tasso, and rarely from Ariosto.... I have been told by an Italian man of letters, that this circumstance arises from the relation which Tasso's poem bears to Turkish affairs; as many of the common people have passed into Turkey, either through chance or war. Besides that, the long antipathy existing between the Venetians and the Turks, gives additional force to the patriotic

CHAP. XVII. A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

Every person who reads the *Orlando Furioso* is perplexed with the variety and disorder of its tales; nor will it be easy for him to say who is the principal hero of the poem, or what is the end proposed. It is true, that the work of Ariosto was intended as a continuation of that of Boiardo; and to this may be attributed its want of a beginning, and irregularity of incident. But this, though it explains the motive, does not justify it; nor, because an artist is perfect in the style which he adopts, are we precluded from examining the relative excellence of that style. "I for my part, (says Tasso, in one of his juvenile *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*,) am of opinion that unity of action is both necessary in a he-

In unity of fable.

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poetry of Tasso. We cannot boast of any similar poems. Thus it was that the people of Greece and Ionia sung the poems of Homer."

The great popularity of Tasso at Venice (which we have seen from a letter of Bernardo in the first volume, was the theatre of Ariosto's greatest glory,) appears also from the testimony of Goldoni, a Venetian writer. This author composed a very agreeable comedy, entitled *Torquato Tasso*, which was represented for the first time in Venice, during the Carnival, 1754. "Our Tasso (says he in the preface) is so celebrated throughout the world, that there are few who have not heard of, and who do not exalt him. Above all others, the Venetians hear his name passing every day from mouth to mouth, from the highest order of the citizens, to the meanest of the populace. There is nobody who does not recite, or sing the verses of his *Jerusalem*, and this has given occasion to innumerable theatrical representations. Every year there is seen upon our theatres a kind of tragi-comedy extracted from his poem; and his name is always deservedly pronounced with the acclamations of the people."

In short, the celebrated Menzini, in his *Arte Poetica Italiana*, while expressing his own, appears to speak also the general sentiment of his countrymen.

> Del gran Torquato, alte memorie adoro;
> Egli è Re di Permesso, e'l Ferrarese
> Siedegli al fianco, e di chi è'l terzo alloro?
>
> Cant. I.

For an account of the manner in which the verses of the *Jerusalem* are sung by the Gondoliers of Venice, see Appendix, (No. XXIX.)

roic poem, and possible to be attained. For as, in this wonderful operation of the Almighty, which is denominated *the world*, we behold the heaven adorned with such variety of stars, and (descending downwards) the air and sea full of birds and fishes, and the earth a habitation of tame and of ferocious animals: As we behold streams, and fountains, and meadows, and woods, and plains, and mountains; on one hand fruits and flowers; on the other ice and snows; here, habitations and cultivated fields, there, solitudes and horrid wastes; yet still it is one world which includes in its bosom so many diversities; *one* is its form and essence; *one* the mode by which all its parts are with discordant concord connected and conjoined, without any thing wanting, yet with nothing superfluous or unnecessary: Thus I judge, that, by an excellent poet, (who for no other reason is called divine, but because he seems to partake of divinity, by the similarity of his operations to those of the Sovereign Artificer,) by an excellent poet, may be formed a work in which, as in a little world, we may read of armies in array, of land and naval fights, of sieges, skirmishes, jousts, and duels; in one place, descriptions of thirst and famine; in another of tempests, prodigies, and conflagrations. Here, we may find celestial and infernal councils; there, seditions, discords, wanderings, adventures, and enchantments; with deeds of cruelty, audacity, or generous courtesy; with happy or hapless, joyful or joyless incidents of love. Yet, still the poem, which contains such variety of matter, may have unity; *one* may be its form and fable, and all this diversity may be

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

so disposed, that the latter parts may correspond with the former; each may regard the other, and every event have such a necessary, or probable dependence on a preceding one, that the alteration or removal of a single member would bring ruin on the whole. This simple variety will be laudable too from its difficulty; for it is an easy matter, and a thing of no industry, to introduce a great diversity of accidents in a multitude of separate actions; but that in a single action the same variety should be found, *Hoc opus, hic labor est.*" *

This latter reflection will furnish the admirers of Tasso with an answer to those who oppose to that writer, the greater variety of Ariosto. The circumstance of this poet availing himself of a multiplicity of actions; the circumstance of the nature of his work allowing him to give birth to every phantasy of his imagination, and to wander, like his hippogryph, through heaven, air, and earth, must naturally have produced a greater change of tone and diversity of subject. Tasso was, by the very nature of his poem, excluded from all that was grotesque and ludicrous; from all that can have no alliance with sublimity, and pomp, and majesty. Yet, in the compass of the chords, which it was permitted him to strike, what other poet has created such variety? or has addressed himself to so many of the higher sympathies of our nature?—It must be remarked too, with regard to Ariosto's fertility of inventions, (not to mention that many of

* *Opere*, vol. V. p. 512.

them are taken from prior writers, and many of them classical fictions attired in romance,) that we see, from the example of writers of fairy tales, that it is much easier inventing a wild, than a natural story; much easier describing what happens in the moon, than what takes place on earth.

As to morality, it will seem incredible that the academicians of Crusca represented Ariosto as a more chaste and blameless writer than Tasso. Their principal reason for this was, that some of the heroes of our poet become enamoured of *Saracen* women, as if whoredom were less a crime when committed with persons who make profession of Christianity. * The purity of morals, however, in a poem, is a proof rather of the virtue and taste, than of the genius of its writer; but it is otherwise with that association of sentiments and manners, which may be called *character*, which strongly particularises an individual of the species, and the painting of which is one of the most difficult tasks of the poet. In this character painting, Homer excels; we become acquainted with his Nestor, his Ulysses, his Ajax, and his Achilles. The bravery of Achilles is not that of Ajax, nor the wisdom of Nestor that of Ulysses. In this quality, Virgil, as has often been remarked, is deficient; there is no portrait in his writings; it is the brave Gyas, and the brave Cloanthus; *fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum.* † The heroes of Ariosto, too, are not individuals, but specific; they are the knights

In painting of character.

* *Opere*, vol. II. 161.

† Pope, *Preface to the Iliad.*

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

of chivalry, bold, gallant, and enterprising; but Ruggiero differs scarcely from Astolfo, or Rodomonte from Sacripante. The characters of Tasso are admirably drawn, and are always conformable to the original idea of them, which he had impressed on the imagination of his reader. Equally marked with those of Homer, they are more consistent, and better supported; for the Grecian poet sometimes indulges himself in a war against probability; and, when he wishes to give lustre to any hero, does it (as I have already remarked,) at the expence of the honour and character of all the rest.

In language.

As to the language of the two authors, the academy praises the ease and fluency of Ariosto, and ridicules the stiffness and the harshness of Tasso. We have already seen, that our poet was sensible of this condensation (as it were) of thought and style, which he had learned from his master Virgil; and which has been practised in general by the greatest poets. As his strain was of a higher mood than that of his rival, he believed it necessary, by this compression, and by a careful selection of words, to give it strength and vigour: he determined not to humble it by carelessness, nor weaken it by diffusion. Of the style of the two authors, a foreigner must speak with diffidence, at least in what regards the nobleness and purity of words; but, in this respect, I believe it is now generally admitted, that Tasso is superior. In a parallel between the two authors, Tiraboschi greatly prefers Ariosto, in pregnancy of fancy and vivacity of description; when he comes to speak of style, however, he makes the following concession: "As to elegance of style, indeed, it

cannot be denied that Tasso is superior to Ariosto; because every word and every expression of the first is studied and select; every thing is said in the most noble manner. The other, more intent on things than words, does not employ much study in the choice of expression; and also uses sometimes mean and plebeian words. He knows, however, to rise when he pleases, and to select opportunely the most elegant phrases; he knows how to introduce into his verses, flowers and ornaments; and thus proves that, if he had chosen to polish his *Orlando* with greater attention, it would not, even in elegance, have yielded to any other poem. But this seems to be the fate of the most rare and fervid geniuses, that they cannot subject themselves to the toilsome labour which a polished composition requires. Perhaps, even from this defect, an advantage arises; for, if they had employed greater art, they would less have followed nature, which, after all, is the highest perfection of a poet." * Of the excellence of the style of Tasso, we have also the following testimony, by a writer who, both in verse and prose, has written in the most sweet and limpid manner: "The language," says Metastasio, "of Virgil and of Torquato, always grand, always ornamented, and always sonorous, has hitherto gained, and will eternally gain, the applause of the greater number, owing to that difficult, and consequently admirable, use of it, which they have made in the imitation of nature. And whatever

* *Storia della Poesia Italiana*, vol. III. p. 253, ed. Mathias.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

many, otherwise very learned critics, have said, or may say, in their endeavour to make us venerate frequent meannesses, negligence, inequalities, inelegances, and want of harmony, as exquisite traits of masterly imitation; whatever they may say of these, and of the disgusting abundance of licences which we meet with in many ancient and modern poets, in other respects excellent, they will never be able to induce the good sense of the public to be pleased with errors, and to reckon defects as ornaments." *

To return to the dialogue of Pellegrino, which gave occasion to these remarks,—the only qualities in which he allows the palm to Ariosto, are clearness of expression, and naturalness of comparison. As a specimen of the good sense in this composition, I shall transcribe a passage, intermixed with the glosses of the academy, from which we may perceive the acuteness of the one, and the ill temper and the want of discernment of the other.

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* *Estratto della Poetica D'Aristotile,* cap. I. p. 28, edit. Zatta. Of the difference of the manner of the two Italian poets, some idea may be formed by the English reader from that of the two rivals of his own country, Dryden and Pope. The first of these writers is diffuse and easy, but he is occasionally, or rather frequently, mean and negligent. In the latter, every thing is condensed, every couplet is pregnant with meaning, every line is not merely polished, but burnished. A dispute similar to that in Italy, has existed in England concerning the relative merit of these two poets; and though Dryden, like Ariosto, is commonly accounted the greater genius, yet, as in the other case, I believe there is scarcely an individual who would not rather be the author of the works of Pope. In precocity of talent, and in the union of genius, with unwearied industry, this poet had a near resemblance to Torquato Tasso.

"CARAFFA. To conclude our conversation; tell me, if, (since, contrary to the general opinion, you have attributed to Tasso the superiority in epic poetry,) you suppose that in time the world, which at present thinks otherwise, will acknowledge this truth?

"ATTENDOLO. I believe not, my lord; because ——

Gloss of the academy. *The author of the dialogue attributes to this personage* [*Attendolo*] *a character different from what is generally supposed, that is, makes him possessed of the most prodigious presumption. How the devil! Shall the world, think we, never be able to find out what he has been capable of discovering?*

"ATTENDOLO. Because the praise and fame of Ariosto are so well established by time; they have struck so deep a root in the public mind, that, to disturb them in the least degree, seems sacrilege. And this good opinion of him continuing, from age to age, it is not unreasonable to believe that it may live and thrive, as long as the vulgar tongue is spoken. But, if (which God forbid,) that should happen to the Italian which has happened to the Latin language, I mean that it should be no longer oral, what do you think the world will then judge of Tasso and of Ariosto?

"CARAFFA. Do you mean that, in this case, Tasso would be held in the highest esteem?

"ATTENDOLO. I think so; and the reason is, that the sweetness which springs from the nature and clearness of the language of Ariosto would not, as now, be felt by the multitude; and being, in other respects, far (as we have seen)

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1585.
Aet. 41.

from poetical perfection, his work would satisfy the understanding of few, and be held in little or no esteem.

"Gloss of the academy. *Nature and clearness please the intelligent as much, or more than the multitude; the discernment of these qualities survives the oral language; and the writings, which are devoid of them, cannot be held in esteem, either sooner or later. Hence the* Godfrey [Jerusalem Delivered,] *both as it is destitute of these, and imperfect to the last degree in all other respects, as it will in a short time fall, so, were it only from defects of language, it will rise no more. The* Furioso, *on the other hand, whether the language in which it is written be spoken or not, will always be held in sovereign esteem.*"

The judgment of foreigners, who almost universally prefer Tasso to Ariosto, and who may be considered as vouchers of what would happen in the case supposed by Pellegrino, demonstrates him to be in the right. It must be acknowledged, however, that, able as his performance is, there appears in it too much keenness, and a kind of disposition to depreciate Ariosto. The turn of mind of the two poets was altogether different; the bent of the one was to the solemn and magnificent, that of the other to the comic and the gay. It was the province of the one to separate the dignified from the familiar, and the beautiful from the deformed; the other wanders unrestrained amidst all the regions of romance; he places the natural at the side of the extravagant, and the exalted at the side of the low. The conduct of the *Orlando* is, indeed, perplexing and absurd; but in no other poem

shall we find a greater number of exquisite passages, of paintings delineated with all the delicacy of Corregio, and all the sweetness and grace of Guido.* In the dialogue of Pellegrino appears the celebrated similitude of the two palaces, which has often been adopted by those who estimate Tasso and Ariosto, and has sometimes been used in the comparison of other poets. "The *Orlando Furioso*," says he, "may, perhaps, be likened to a palace, of which the plan is defective, but which contains most superb saloons, noble chambers, galleries, and ornamented windows; adorned, apparently, with African and Grecian marble, and rich, throughout, with azure and with gold. The *Jerusalem*, on the other hand, may be considered as a fabric, less vast, indeed, than the other, but of which the ornaments, though not gaudy, are suitable and elegant, and the architecture supremely perfect. Without doubt, the palace of which the apartments are most numerous, and which is apparently more rich and glaring, will give most delight to the ignorant and simple. But the true masters of the art, who can perceive its defects, will be dissatisfied with its barbarous ornaments, and will be delighted with the architecture of

* I may mention, as an example, the description of Olympia, canto XI. st. 65, et seq. How admirable, too, is the last verse of the following quotation, taken from canto VII. st. 14, when Ariosto is describing Alcina:—

Bianca neve è il bel collo; e'l petto latte:
Il collo è tondo, e il petto è colmo e largo,
Due pome acerbe, e pur d'avorio fatte,
Vengono e van, come onda al primo margo.

CHAP. XVII. A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

the lesser fabric, as being a structure elegant and perfect in all its parts." *

From the extract which I have given from the dialogue of Pellegrino, it will be seen of what nature were the glosses of the academicians. Sometimes it is a mere laconic taunt as, *Really, . . . How the devil was this discovered?* Sometimes they expand themselves into the most injurious outrages, which, however contemptible, it was difficult for their victim to contemn. But their treatment of Pellegrino was mild in comparison of Tasso, who had known nothing of the dialogue till after its publication. They prefer the rhapsodies of Pulci and Boyardo to the *Jerusalem Delivered;* which, according to them, is a poor, and sterile, and rickety, and obscure, and disagreeable work. They add, that the language of Tasso is not Italian but Lombard; that he knows nothing of construction; that he is cold, and forced, and languid; that, in fine, he is a wretched pedant, whose work would immediately perish. Not satisfied with abusing himself, they attack his father; they assert that his *Amadigi* is a most miserable composition, and that it is totally pillaged from the works of others. Finally, they protest that they have no intention of hurting the feelings, either of the author of the dialogue, or that of the *Jerusalem;* and they pretend, that, on these subjects, our poet himself cannot be of a different opinion from them.

Savage inhumanity of the academy of Crusca.

* *Opere,* vol. II. p. 136.

If we consider the melancholy condition in which Tasso had been, and in which he still was, it is impossible not to feel indignant at these fiend-like attacks. He seems to have been peculiarly wounded by the injuries done to his father; and, accordingly, wrote an *Apology*, in which he repels the objections made, both to the poem of Bernardo and his own. This composition, which is in the form of dialogue, is written with great acuteness; and its only fault is that it sometimes degenerates into subtilty and Grecian reasonings. But never does our poet descend to wrangling and abuse; he never recriminates on Ariosto and his adherents; but preserves throughout the dignified demeanor of the author of the *Jerusalem Delivered.* *

In condemning the work of Tasso, as a poem not merely abounding with defects, but absolutely without merit, the academicians accused, as devoid of taste, all those critics to whose judgment it had been submitted. To the offence conceived on this account, was added the indignation of every feeling mind; since, whatever might be thought of the relative merit of the two poets, nothing could be less justifiable than the torrent of unprovoked abuse, which was poured on this distinguished and unfortunate genius. In order to shield themselves from the general disgust, and to

* *Opere*, vol. II. p. 285. The apology of Tasso was dedicated to Don Ferrante Gonzaga, Prince of Molsetta, in a letter, twentieth July, 1585, Of the liberality of this illustrious man to our poet, I formerly mentioned an instance, and he now sent him an hundred and fifty scudi of gold.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

apologise for their persecution of Tasso, a letter was published, pretending that, in his dialogue on *Honest Pleasure*, that writer had calumniated the city of Florence; and that their proceedings against him were not an offence, but a chastisement. The person whose name was affixed to this performance was Bastiano de' Rossi, a creature of Salviati, and by him named secretary of the academy of Crusca. The work itself is a model of the ridiculous. It consists of a long discourse on the dignity of the city of Florence, the number of knights of Malta which it had produced, with other topics equally interesting. Amongst other proofs of the "poisonous malignity" of Tasso against that city, it is mentioned, that, in his comparison of the buildings of France and Italy, he had taken no notice of the cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore at Florence. In defending Ariosto's unity of action, the Crusca had said, that he formed many webs into one web: "Who ever," replied our poet, (and it is his only sarcasm,) Who ever heard of one web composed of several webs? This, now, is ignorance of the art of weaving, which one would think might be understood by the Florentines." Shocked that both here, and in the dialogue on *Honest Pleasure*, Florence should be considered as a manufacturing town, Bastiano endeavours to repel so horrid an accusation. "In what city (says he) have there been so many families full of *cardinals?* Six of the Medici, three Salviati, three Pucci, two Gaddi, and others in different families, to the number of thirty-six. These, O Torquato Tasso! are the people whom you would represent as spending the day in conversing with the wea-

Their apology for their conduct.

vers of silk and velvet. These are they who are represented as sitting all the day beside the spindles, with a pen at their ear." Bastiano concludes with boasting how many people had died of the pestilence at Florence in the year 1348. *

As the writer of this senseless production endeavoured to prove that Tasso, in his dialogue on *Honest Pleasure*, had falsified the sentiments of Martello and Bernardo, (for the express purpose of calumniating the city of Florence,) Salviati imagined, that he might now crow victory. " Some days ago (says Scipio Gonzaga, in an epistle, dated thirteenth August, 1585, and addressed to Scalabrino,) I received a letter from the Cavalier Salviati. Having heard that, in my passage through Florence, I had used some expressions, blaming, in substance, the bitterness and derision with which that academy of his has slandered poor Tasso, he sent me a printed letter of Bastiano de' Rossi, remarking, that, when I had perused it, he hoped I should alter my opinion with regard to the incivility of his Florentines. To this I answered last week, and in a manner, I believe, which will not please; since, without abandoning the defence of my friend, I have shewed that, as far as a literary dispute is concerned, they had rather rendered their cause worse than better, by pretending to have reasons to dislike the author. I added, that it seemed strange that they, and particularly Salviati, who had once a high opinion of Tasso, and of his talents for

* *Opere*, vol. III. p. 423.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

poetry, should now, from an alteration of affection, change that opinion; a thing which is a manifest perversion of propriety. Some other topics I also hinted, and particularly the condition of Tasso, which is calculated rather to awaken pity, than a thirst of vengeance. I have, however, dispatched the whole in a few words, and reserve it to my return to speak fully and *viva voce*, in order that they may not discharge against me also some Cruscata." *

To the letter of Bastiano, Tasso deigned to write an answer, not indeed addressed to him, but to the academicians, in which he complains, that they, who in his better days had sought his friendship, should now, in his afflictions, treat him so unmercifully. He defends with the utmost ingenuity the counsel given by his father to the Prince of Salerno; proves that Martello had spoken as well as written on the subject;

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* In this letter Scipio Gonzaga mentions a circumstance more glorious to Tasso than the plaudits of all the academies in the world. Some highwaymen pillaging a courier of his most valuable effects, found an envelop, in which was a work of our poet, that Scalabrino had addressed to Gonzaga. Leaving the letter, they retained the book, saying, this was a thing which they could by no means let go, as it would serve them for amusement. The fact is extremely well narrated by Gonzaga. "Certissima cosa è, che quegli uomini dabbene, che svaligiarono il Corriere, non contenti d'aver soddisfatto al loro bisogno con la roba più utile, vollero anco per mostrarsi begl' Ingegni dare un poco di pastura non necessaria a i loro strambi intelletti co i Componimenti del nostro Sig. Tasso. 'E veramente oltre l'effetto che si vide d'aver lasciato venire la vostra lettera senza il libro alligato, portò la fama a Mantoua, siccome a me riferì uno de' miei, che avendo coloro scoperto *Opera del Tasso*, subito fu di loro chi disse: 'Questo non si lasci per niente, che ci servirà per trattenimento;' il che è pur gran segno della stima e del pregio, in che sono appresso ad ogni sorta d'uomini le cose di quell' infelice." *Opere*, vol. X. p. 388. These, as we shall see in the sequel, were not the only banditti who gave proofs of their high admiration, and even veneration, for Tasso.

and adds, that, had it been otherwise, it was enough for a writer of dialogues to adhere to probability. As to his supposed disparagement of the people of Florence, he recalls to their memory, that, in the very dialogue which was complained of, he had equalled Florence to Rome and Athens; affirms that the expressions used by Bernardo were adopted from their own citizens, Dante, Villani, and Casa, and were natural in the circumstances in which their speaker is represented; and remarks, that, at the time he wrote his *Comparison of France and Italy*, he had never seen Florence, and its cupola of Santa Maria del Fiore. He adds, that, were it true that the source of his persecutions was the dialogue complained of, it seemed wonderful that they did not commence with the publication of that production; but that now, after some years, it was brought forward as a buckler to shield themselves from that indignation which their conduct ought to excite.*

The genius and persecutions of Tasso, and, still more, vanity, and the desire of distinction, raised our poet a number of partizans; and for several years the dispute was continued with much keenness. It will not be necessary, however, or rather would be altogether superfluous, to record either the names or the publications of these combatants. On the side of the academy of Crusca, the writings which appeared, though printed under different names, were gene-

* *Opere*, vol. III. p. 467.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

rally composed by Salviati. This person was invited to Ferrara, in 1587, where he wrote adulatory discourses in praise of the family of Este, and a new treatise against the *Jerusalem Delivered.* This he dedicated to Alphonso of Este, who thus permitted his name to be prefixed to a performance which detracted from a poem, without which that name would now be equally uninteresting with that of his meanest menial. Salviati, however, did not find at Ferrara that plenty and quiet which he expected; but, after about ten months, returned to Florence, more poor, and more dissatisfied, than ever. In that city he was seized with a long sickness, from which, after a year's suffering, he was delivered by death, on the eleventh of July, 1589.

Such was the origin and progress of the celebrated contest between Tasso and the Crusca; and thus, what many people conceive to have been a solemn and impartial decision of the critics of the Italian nation in favour of Ariosto, was nothing but the wretched cavil of a single splenetic individual. Of the general mistake of critics on this head, the following specimen may be given: "Nor did Tasso's poem, (says Mr Warton, in his *Remarks on the Faerie Queene of Spenser,*) though composed in some measure on a regular plan, give its author, among the Italians at least, any greater share of esteem and reputation on that account. Ariosto, with all his extravagancies, was still preferred. The superiority of the *Orlando Furioso* was at length established by a formal decree of the academicians della Crusca, who,

Error of Mr Warton.

amongst other literary debates, held a solemn court of enquiry concerning the merit of both poems." CHAP. XVII. A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

"Such, (continues Mr Warton,) was the prevailing taste, when Spenser projected the *Faerie Queene*; a poem, which, according to the practice of Ariosto, was to consist of allegories, enchantments, and romantic expeditions, conducted by knights, giants, magicians, and fictitious beings. It may be urged, that Spenser made an unfortunate choice, and discovered but little judgment in adopting Ariosto for his example, rather than Tasso, who had so evidently exceeded his rival, at least in conduct and decorum. But our author naturally followed the poem which was most celebrated and popular. For, although the French critics universally gave the preference to Tasso, yet, in Italy, the partisans on the side of Ariosto were by far the most powerful, and consequently in England: for Italy, in the age of Queen Elizabeth, gave laws to our island in all matters of taste, as France has done ever since. At the same time it may be supposed, that, of the two, Ariosto was Spenser's favourite; and that he was naturally biassed to prefer that plan which would admit the most extensive range for his unlimited imagination."

These reflexions of Mr Warton are a strong proof of the necessity of collecting facts, before we begin to reason. Spenser is here represented as giving a balanced preference of Ariosto to Tasso, before he began his poem, and as, in consequence of this, adopting the *Orlando* as his model. The *Faerie Queene*, however, was begun at least two years

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

before the publication of the complete *Jerusalem*, and probably four or five before a copy of the poem of Tasso reached the English poet. In a letter to his friend Gabriel Harvey, dated April 10, 1580, Spenser thus expresses himself: "Nowe my *Dreames* and *dying Pellicane*, being fully finished.... I wil in hande forthwith with my *Faerie Queene*, whyche I praye you hartily send me with al expedition; and your friendly letters, and *long expected judgement* withal, whych let not be shorte, but in all pointes such as you ordinarilye use, and I extraordinarily desire." Thus, the *Faerie Queene* must have been begun at least early in 1579, and the first mutilated edition of the *Jerusalem* was published only in August, 1580.

The "sage, serious Spenser," as he is called by Milton, had indeed a much greater conformity with Tasso than with Ariosto, and it is exceedingly to be regretted that he began his poem before he had perused the *Jerusalem*. The *three* first books of the *Faerie Queene*, (published together in 1590,) were *certainly* finished in 1589, and probably a year or two sooner,* and it is not probable the *Jerusalem* could have reached Spenser, in Ireland, before 1584; that is, when he was about the middle of his labours. In fact, his broad imitation of Tasso begins at the very middle of his second book, [book II. canto 6.] and, by the largeness of his copying, it is easy to perceive the wonder and delight with which

Spenser's admiration of Tasso.

* Todd's Spenser, vol. III. pp. 22, 100.

the *Jerusalem* had inspired him. While from Ariosto he is contented to borrow occasionally a few lines, he not merely imitates, but inserts whole pages translated from the poem of Tasso, into his own.* In one thing indeed, (the *labor limae*,) Tasso differed greatly from Spenser, who seems to have given himself very little time to polish. This will evidently appear, if we consider that the English poet died at the age of forty-five, and that, in addition to his voluminous printed works, a formidable list of lost ones has been given by Mr Todd.† Had he met, before he began his poem, with the work of Tasso, had he imitated that writer in correctness of design, and labour of correction, Spenser would not now be the favourite only of a few learned critics, who seem to consider their admiration of him as a sort of distinction from the vulgar herd of readers, but would, like his great contemporary, be the delight of literary Europe.‡

I shall conclude this chapter, and the history of the controversy, with an extract from a letter of the illustrious Me-

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* Book II. canto 6. *Ibid.* canto 12. † Vol. I. p. 171.

‡ I have followed (says Spenser, in his prefatory letter to Sir Walter Raleigh, dated 23d January, 1589,) all the antique poets historical; first Homere, who, in the persons of Agamemnon and Ulysses, hath ensampled a good governour, and a virtuous man, the one in his Ilias, the other in his Odysseis: then Virgil, whose like intention was to doe in the person of Æneas; after him Ariosto comprised them both in his Orlando; and lately Tasso dissevered them again, and formed both parts in two persons, namely, that part which they in philosophy call *Ethice*, or virtues of a private man, coloured in his Rinaldo; the other named *Politice*, in his Godfredo. By example of which excellente poets, I labour to pourtraict in Aurthure, before he was king, the image of a brave knight." I quote this passage to show, that, in the opinion of Spenser, Tasso, eight years after the publication of his poem, classed with Homer and Virgil.

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

tastasio, concerning the relative merits of Tasso and Ariosto. It is dated Vienna, 10th October, 1768, and addressed to Sig. Domenico Diodati. The value of the decision of a critic, who united the theory of a great master to the skill of an excellent artist, cannot be overlooked.

Sentiments of Metastasio on the comparative merits of Tasso and Ariosto.

"Your other request (says he,) that I would pronounce on the comparative merits of Ariosto and of Tasso, is a task too difficult for my limited faculties. You know, Sir, with what tempests the Italian Parnassus was shaken, when Godfrey first disputed with Orlando that precedence, of which, before his appearance, he had been so justly in possession: you know how the press groaned with the useless labours of the Pellegrinis, the Rossis, the Salviatis, and a hundred other champions of either poet. Nor are you ignorant that the pacific Horace Ariosto, the descendant of Ludovico, attempted in vain to reconcile the combatants. That he represented to them, that the poems of those two divine bards were of a kind so different, as not to admit of a parallel; that Torquato had resolved never to lay down the trumpet, and had, in a wonderful manner, adhered to his resolution; that the design of Ludovico, (in which he had as amazingly succeeded,) was to delight his readers, by gracefully mingling with the heroic, the festive, and the gay. He told them, that the one had demonstrated the magic power of art, the other the uncurbed felicity of nature; that each of them had justly acquired the applause and admiration of the public, that each had reached the summit of poetical renown, but by a different path, and without intentional rival-

ry.* You cannot, in short, be ignorant of the brilliant rather than solid distinction, that the poem of Tasso is the best, but that Ariosto is the greater poet. Knowing, as you do, all this, how can you believe, that I would dare to arrogate to myself sufficient authority to decide a question, which, after so many obstinate literary contests, still remains undetermined?—However, if, in such a dispute, I may not be permitted to sit *pro tribunali*, at least I shall be allowed to give an historical narrative of what I myself experienced in the perusal of these two distinguished poets. When I first was born to literature, I found the whole world divided into parties. That very illustrious Lycaeum, into which I had the happiness to be received, followed that of the Homer of Ferrara; and with that ardent and excessive zeal, which commonly accompanies such contests. In order to nourish my poetical inclination, my teachers recommended to me the perusal and imitation of Ariosto; thinking that his happy liberty was more likely to fertilize genius, than the servile regularity (as they termed it,) of his rival. I submitted to authority; and the infinite merit of the author bewitched me afterwards to such a degree, that, not satisfied with repeated perusals, I was induced to commit to memory a great part of his poem; and, woe to the daring man, who asserted that Ariosto was either not immaculate, or could possibly have a rival! Sometimes, indeed, I met with persons,

* See *Opere di Tasso*, vol. III. p. 131.

CHAP. XVII.
A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

who, in order to seduce me, repeated, from time to time, some of the finest passages of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, with which I felt myself exceedingly affected and delighted. But, faithful to my sect, I detested this complacency; I considered it as one of those sinful inclinations to which our corrupted nature is prone, and which it is our duty to correct; and in this opinion I passed all those years, in which our judgment is the mere imitation of others. At length, when I arrived at that period in which we begin to combine our own ideas, and to weigh them in the scales of justice, I read the *Jerusalem Delivered*, rather from satiety, and a desire of change, than from the hope of profit, or of pleasure. It is indeed impossible to pourtray the extraordinary revolution which this perusal occasioned in my mind. The spectacle which I saw, as in a picture, presenting at one view a great and single action, clearly proposed, skillfully conducted, and perfectly completed; the variety of events always conducing to this end, and rich without confusion; the magic of a style always limpid, always sublime, always sonorous, always capable of ennobling even the most humble and common objects: the brilliancy and force of the colouring, with which he adorns; the bewitching evidence with which he narrates, and persuades; the truth and consistence of his characters; the connexion of ideas; the learning, judgement, and, above all, that prodigious force of genius, which, instead of being exhausted, as generally happens in labours of long continuance, is marvellously increased, till the very last verse of the poem: all

these things filled me with a new, and, till then, unknown delight; with reverential wonder; with a keen remorse for my long injustice; and an implacable indignation against those who imagine Ariosto to be injured by a mere comparison with Tasso. Not but I perceive in him some marks of human imperfection, but who can be said to be free from them? Can his great predecessor?—If Tasso sometimes displeases by too much, Ariosto as frequently offends by too little labour and study. If you might expunge from the one a few trifling conceits, beneath the elevation of his mind, you might readily efface in the other, passages too indecent for the public eye. If, in the amorous fondness in the *Jerusalem*, one would wish less rhetoric, a complaint may be made of the lewdness of that in the *Orlando*. *Verum, opere in longo, fas est obrepere somnum*, and it would be a malignant, as it would be a pedantic vanity, to point out, with scrutinizing keenness, the rare and little spots in two such splendid luminaries, *quas aut incuria fudit, aut humana parum cavit natura.* All this, you will say, does not answer my question, and that you wish to know, definitely and clearly, to which of the poems I would assign the preference. I have already, my dear Sir, professed respectfully, my just repugnance to such a daring decision; and I have disclosed to you with the utmost sincerity the emotions which each of these divine bards excited in my mind. If all this be not sufficient, accept the following result of a late examination of myself upon the subject. If, in ostentation of his power, our good father Apollo were ever to resolve, in a whim, to

CHAP. XVII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

make me a great poet, and for this purpose were to command me to declare openly to which of the two poets I should wish what he was about to dictate to me to resemble, certainly I should hesitate in my choice; but I feel that my natural, and, perhaps, too great propensity to order, exactness, and system, would at length incline me to that of Tasso."

CHAPTER XVIII.

Tasso petitions the city of Bergamo, to make application for his release—Writes a Discourse in praise of Matrimony—Gives an account of a Folletto or Sprite, which molests him in the Hospital—Is seized with a violent fever, of which he thinks himself supernaturally cured—Is set at liberty by the influence of the Prince of Mantua.

A. D. 1585 — 1586.
AET. 41 — 42.

CHAP. XVIII.
A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

ESCAPED at length from the detail of controversies, I again resume the melancholy story of the life of Tasso. Before, however, bidding farewell to these disputes, I would once more remark, that nobody was ever written down but by himself; that clouds may be raised for a while by prejudice, or envy; but they are at last dispersed, and the Sun of Genius shines forth with redoubled radiance. "The *Jerusalem*, (says Metastasio,) blasted all the literary conspira-

CHAP. XVIII. A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

cies against it, the great *Cid* emerged from the oppression of envious power, and the *Phaedra* triumphed over her rash rival." As the person, however, who pants for glory, must, in proportion to this thirst, be sensible to disapprobation, it unfortunately happens, that distinguished minds are most easily wounded; and that a morbid shrinking from censure long survives a sensibility to praise. The fame of Tasso has been sufficiently cherished by posterity; but to him, alas! of what consequence is this justice? Envy was indifferent to the voice of Futurity, and it was sufficient for her if she could trouble his days.*

Tasso petitions the city of Bergamo.

As the period of the confinement of our poet seemed indefinitely prolonged, he determined to petition the city of Bergamo, to make application to the duke, for the deliverance of its citizen. Of this petition, addressed to the heads of council, and communicated to them by Licino, (one of their literary townsmen, who this year had become intimate with Tasso at Ferrara,) the following is a translation.†

"Illustrious Signors, and most worshipful Patrons,

"Torquato Tasso, a Bergamese, both by origin and affection, having lost the inheritance of his father, and the dowry

* Ainsi on se plâit à disputer au génie vivant la place qu'il mérite, et qu' importe que la Posterité lui fasse justice! l'Envie se croit soulagée, si elle a pû troubler ses jours. Condorcet *Eloge de Huyghens.*

† *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 134.

of his mother; and, besides the recompence of long services and many labours, being deprived not only of the hope of reward, but also of health and liberty, has not, amidst so many miseries, lost his confidence in your city. He has the boldness to entreat that a public resolution may be formed to give him aid and shelter; and that the Duke of Ferrara, once his patron and benefactor, may be petitioned to restore him to his country, his relations, his friends, and himself. This unhappy person supplicates you, therefore, that you would deign to beseech his highness, and would send Monsig. Licino, or some other, on purpose to effect his deliverance. By this condescension, you will eternally oblige the petitioner, nor shall the memory of your kindness end with his life.

Most illustrious Signors, your affectionate Servant, Torquato Tasso, a prisoner, and infirm, in the hospital of St Anne's, in Ferrara."

This petition being read in full council, greatly moved the assembly; and Licino, as a zealous and active friend of our poet, was, with one voice, fixed on as their ambassador. In order to insure success, he carried along with him a stone, containing an ancient inscription relative to the family of Este, which the duke had long been desirous to possess. By that prince his accustomed promise was given, that Tasso should soon be liberated; and that his only design was to have him cured, if possible, of his obstinate infirmity—as if that were more easily to be effected amidst the anguish of

CHAP. XVIII. A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

disappointment and the languor of restraint. It is the opinion of Serassi, that Alphonso dreaded the vengeance of his poet, if ever he should be placed beyond the sphere of his power; and that this was his principal motive for procrastinating Torquato's release. Even when he afterwards resigned him to his relation, the Duke of Mantua, it was only as a deposit, and on condition that this prince would not allow him to depart without obtaining his consent. The supposition is probable; † but I am also inclined to impute the retardation of this unfortunate man's deliverance to the haughty and vindictive disposition of Alphonso. Irritated originally in a considerable degree, his anger was by no means allayed by the notoriety which Tasso had given to his imprisonment. * The solicitations, too, for the liberty of our poet were so frequent, that Alphonso, though disposed, would not have seemed to have granted it spontaneously; so that, partly from revenge, and partly from pride, he resolved not to yield to importunity; a concession which, in some degree, would have implied that his confinement of Tasso had been wrongous. I have already mentioned the Duke of Ferrara's persecution of Guarini, when, in 1588, he fled secretly from his court. Wherever that poet sought protection, he

† *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 63.

* Tasso, for example, thus writes to Count Octavius Spinola, chamberlain of the emperor: "Io dimando la vita all' Imperatore, ed insieme la libertà; perchè il Sereniss. Signor Duca non può negare a sua Maestà nè l'una nè l'altra, s'ella si degnerà di chiederla," &c. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 473.

was pursued by the enmity, and oppressed by the influence of his former patron. Such obstinacy of vengeance is frequently to be found in petty sovereigns, who, with all the pride and state of royalty, are not sufficiently removed from the generality of mankind, to ensure them of perpetual homage and obedience.

It is somewhat remarkable, that the letters of Tasso to Alphonso have, in general, less good sense in them than those addressed to other persons. Of one of these (without date) the following is a translation: "To-day Sig. Giovanni Tartaro has been here to see me; and he could not but clearly perceive and know the misery in which I am. He has promised me to employ his good offices with your highness, in order that I may be liberated, and in some degree consoled. My intention is to serve the Sig. Marquis of Este, provided I could, on the word of your highness, or of the duchess your sister, pass secure through the state of Milan, without suspicion of danger from the inquisition or any thing else; and, particularly, I would wish to pass secure from the anger of the king. † I should be contented also, (though not so well,) to stop in Turin, or in Mantua, or even in Ferrara, in the house of some gentleman, who should so act towards me, that I might remain in a little comfort after the many

† Philip II. of Spain I presume. Tasso seems to have been of opinion, that he had excited the anger of all the princes of Europe. Perhaps, at the beginning of his malady, some pains had been taken to persuade him of this, for the purpose of preventing his wandering.

CHAP. XVIII. A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

miseries that I have undergone. I have sometimes attributed much to myself, and considered myself as somebody: But now, seeing in how many ways imagination has imposed upon me, I doubt that it has also deceived me in this opinion of my own consequence. Indeed, methinks, all the past has been an uneasy dream, and hence I am resolved to rely on my imagination no longer. I would wish, however, to have it in my power to soothe my mind with the consolations of agreeable society, so that I most humbly supplicate your highness to use towards me some act of liberality, of courtesy, and of clemency. And with all humility I offer reverence." *

Among the visitors of Tasso this year, was his nephew Antonino Sersale, who had left Sorrento on account of some quarrel, and for whom he procured a situation at the court of Mantua. † But the person by whose society his solitude was principally cheered, was Antonio Constantino, secretary of Camillo Albizi, the Tuscan ambassador. This young man had lately been a disciple of the celebrated Muretus, and was well instructed in Greek and Roman literature. Devoting himself to the study of Italian poetry, he endeavoured to insinuate himself into the acquaintance of Tasso, who admitted him to the most intimate and confidential friendship.

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 366.

† Tasso provided places for both his nephews, and his affectionate regard for them appears from many of his letters, IX. pp. 334, 360, 401; X. pp. 280, 289, 296, 300, 305.

To him, indeed, the greater number of our poet's familiar letters are addressed; and Constantino seems, in future, to have had the honour and felicity of acting as his principal comforter and guide.

From an epistle of Tasso, dated on the fifth of September, 1585, it appears he was in very bad health,* nevertheless he employed himself in writing, this month, a discourse in praise of matrimony. This was in answer to a composition of Hercules, brother of Christopher Tasso, in which he had spoken with blame of the ladies, and had ridiculed the connubial state. With an inconsistency not unusual among philosophers, Hercules had scarcely finished his treatise, when he married Lelia Augusta, a beautiful and accomplished young woman. Tasso, in his short and friendly attack on his relation, praises the ladies, but especially the matrimonial state, with considerable felicity of thought, and a variety of delightful imagery. "Oh, sweet conjunction of hearts! (exclaims he, in a passage which has been imitated by Milton,) Oh, blissful union of souls! Oh, legitimate tie, and chastest yoke; which, instead of being burdensome, it is ravishing to bear! By thee the race of man was first collected within one city, wall, and roof, which, like the bestial herd, was wont to range in wood and field. By thee the dismal cave was changed to the elegant chamber, and the frigid mountain to the stately palace. By thee what pleased was

Tasso writes a discourse in praise of matrimony.

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 312.

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1585. Aet. 41.

rendered lawful, and holy that which was desired. Thou didst impose a sweet law to human pleasures, a laudable chain to tumultuous appetite; by thee what was common, was appropriated; what was universal, became peculiar; and what was worthless, of highest value. By thee was joined honour with delight, and chastity with love; and faith, and purity, and all the virtues, descended upon earth... By thee was converted bitterness into the sweetness of love... By thee were known relationship .. and the charities of father and of son." *

The object of Tasso in composing this discourse, was to introduce himself into the good graces of Signora Lelia, his new female relation. †. To this lady he also wrote an affectionate letter, and a beautiful complimentary canzone on her

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* *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 195.

Hail, wedded love, mysterious law, true source
Of human offspring, sole propriety
In Paradise, of all things common else!
By thee adult'rous lust was driven from men
Among the bestial herds to range; by thee,
Founded in reason, loyal, just, and pure,
Relations dear, and all the charities
Of father, son, and brother, first were known.
Far be it that I should write thee sin or blame,
Or think thee unbefitting holiest place,
Perpetual fountain of domestic sweets!

P. L. Book IV. v. 750.

† *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 444.

marriage.* In a short time he was favoured with an answer, and (what was more valuable) with some very fine linens, a present which appears to have been very seasonable.† At this period, too, he had the satisfaction of receiving a Latin translation of the two first books of his *Jerusalem*, which had been executed in London two years before, by the learned Scipio Gentili. It had been published at Lyons in 1584, and was reprinted this year at Venice, in a very elegant manner. Not satisfied with this proof of his esteem, Gentili, in 1586, published at London, *Annotations on the Jerusalem;* in which he frequently defends Tasso from the objections of his opponents. Of the compliments paid to a work, there can be none more sincere than that of translating it; and the next after that, is explaining and illustrating it. Nor must it have given little satisfaction to our poet, that his work was awakening the sensibility, and soothing the fancy, in a region so remote.‡

Annotations on the Jerusalem, by S. Gentili.

Scipio Gonzaga, the friend of Tasso, was, towards the end of September, this year, created patriarch of Jerusalem, by Sixtus V., the new pontiff. Of this circumstance he communicated information to Luca Scalabrino,‖ who was at this period on a visit at Ferrara. "Your epistle of the twenty-fifth past, (writes he in a letter of the twenty-fifth of Sep-

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 312; VI. p. 273; *Terra gentil*, &c. † *Ibid.* vol. IX. p. 268.
‡ *Ibid.* p. 479.
‖ See concerning this gentleman, vol. I. p. 222 of this book.

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1585 Aet. 41.

tember, 1585,) found me at Rome, where I have been these fifteen days; and although it be somewhat old, it is not less precious to me, especially on account of what you write me of our Sig. Tasso. May it please the ever blessed God to grant him such an interval and sanity of mind, as that he may be able to attend to the completion of his tragedy; and I assure you there is nothing of the kind which I expect with greater longing.... I must not omit to tell you, that, in the Consistory of Monday last, our lord, [the Pope,] of his mere good-will and benignity, *me penitus inscio*, honoured me with the dignity of Patriarch of Jerusalem. I pray you to communicate this news of me to Sig. Tasso, who perhaps may be pleased at learning, that I am successor of that Patriarch to whom Godfrey was to recount the wars of Syria; and that, if I have not jurisdiction, I have at least action over that country, which has been so much honoured by his pen."

Scipio Gonzaga is made patriarch of Jerusalem.

This allusion to the former patriarch of Jerusalem refers to a change, which, at the time of the last revision of the *Goffredo*, had been proposed to be made in that poem.* On the sixteenth of October, 1585, Gonzaga writes to Scalabrino, in the following terms: "It has given me much pleasure to learn, that our Sig. Tasso has received such satisfaction, from the tidings which I communicated. I had no desire, however, that he should thence have taken occasion to believe, that I am a great favourite of our lord, and entreat me, as he has

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 85.

done, to apply to his Holiness for his deliverance. Even were I the favourite he supposes, we both know what would be the propriety of such an application.* I cannot imagine how I shall be able to satisfy him in my answer, however I must endeavour to manœuvre the best way I can. The reply of the Crusca to his *Apology*, I have not yet seen, but I can obtain it when I chuse; indeed I desire not to see it, as I hear it is equally malevolent as the other. With regard to Sig. D. Ferrante, I have the most certain hope that he will shew, or rather has already shown some testimony of regard to Sig. Tasso, since his excellency affirmed that he would do so before I left Lombardy. I trust, likewise, that this is not all; since the same lord has given me hopes, or rather assurances, that he will take into his service both the nephews of Tasso, but of one at least I am perfectly certain. All this he has done, on applications made by me previous to my departure, so that Tasso has reason to be contented with me, although I do not procure him the letters which he wishes from his Holiness. I send you with this, (adds Gonzaga, in a postscript,) a letter to Tasso, who says, in the end of his, that he can have no reply from you, although you are in Ferrara, and have it in your power to

* Ben mi è stato caro d'intendere che'l nostro Sig. Tasso si sia anch' egli commosso non poco a questa nuova. Ma non vorrei già ch'egli da questo avesse preso occasione di credere, ch' io fossi un gran favorito di N. Sig. poichè mi prega a fare uffizio con S. Santità per la sua liberazione. Benchè, quando anche Io fossi, sappiamo, quanto cotale uffizio sarebbe a proposito. Non so come potrò soddisfargli nella risposta; ma vedrò pure d'andare scaramucciando il meglio ch'io saprò. *Opere del Tasso*, vol. X. p. 390.

CHAP. XVIII
A. D. 1586
Aet. 42.

procure him many pleasures. One may see from this his wayward humour; however, you will try to satisfy him as much as you can by giving him my letter."

In the year 1586, the marriage of Don Cæsar of Este, presumptive heir of Alphonso, and who in fact succeeded him, took place at Florence, with Donna Virginia de' Medici, sister of the Grand Duke of Tuscany. Much pomp was displayed, and much festivity obtained at the court of her brother, on this joyful occasion. Tasso had been anxious to be present at these nuptials; a desire which, as might naturally be expected, was not fulfilled.* However, he refitted his lyre on the occasion, and produced some sonnets, ballets, and a very dignified canzone.† He was not without hope, that, as the marriage of one duchess had formed the æra of his imprisonment, that of another might be the epoch of his release. He believed this the more readily, as, though he considered the father of Don Cæsar, (Donno Alphonso of Este,) as one of his greatest enemies,‡ the young prince himself had always behaved to

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 126.

† *Opere*, vol. VI. p. 271. *Ciò che morte rallenta Amor restringi.* The first stanza of this canzone, in all the modern editions of the *Aminta*, is printed as the chorus of the fourth act of that pastoral. It is neither in the first edition of Aldus, nor in any MS.

‡ Tasso, in a letter to A. Grillo, says "l'illustrissimo Signor Don Alfonso D' Este è la principal cagione, che impedisce la mia libertà." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 19. In this Tasso often varies; for, writing to Count Hercules Rondinelli, 2d January, 1581, he attributes his harsh treatment in prison to the anger of Cardinal Lewis, and requests the count to procure the intercession of the Duchess of Nemours, sister of Alphonso, for his deliverance. Vol. X. p. 68. IX. 23.

him, with courtesy and affability, bordering on affection.† As usual, however, he was put off with promises, and the only reward he seems to have received for his lyrics, was the indulgence of visiting the churches during Lent. Valuable as this privilege is, abstractly considered, it was still more so to our poet, who had been lately, and probably at this time was troubled with a kind of Sprite, Puck, or *Folletto*, (as he terms it,) which gave him much disturbance. Of this sprite, as well as of the condition of Torquato, we have the following curious account, in a long letter to his friend Cataneo.*

Tasso is disturbed by a Sprite.

"To-day, which is the last but one of the year, the brother of the Reverend Licino brought me your two letters, but one of them disappeared as soon as I had read it, and I believe that the Folletto has carried it off, because it was that in which he was spoken of. This is one of those wonders which I have frequently seen in the hospital. Hence I am certain that they are the operations of some magician, of which indeed, I have many proofs, but especially from a loaf taken

† *Opere*, vol. IX. 19, 125, et seq.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 345. Serassi, who cancels the greatest part of this letter, introduces it in the following nàive manner: Perciocchè alle antiche sue indisposizioni s'era anche aggiunta la noja di uno spirito folletto, che fieramente lo inquietava, rovistandogli ogni cosa, rubandogli e denari e robe, e facendogli sparire, secondo ch' egli afferma persino le vivande d'innanzi agli occhi; *cosa strana veramente, ma che peravventura* potrebbe essere stata o artificio di qualche furfante, oppure effetto della sua sconvolta fantasia, p. 376. The Venice edition of this letter being very incorrectly printed, I have had recourse to that of Florence, in folio, vol. V. p. 216.

CHAP. XVIII. A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

visibly from before my eyes, an hour before sunset,† and a plate of fruit, which vanished one day when I was visited by that Polish youth, who deserves such admiration. The same thing has happened with other provisions, at a time, too, when nobody entered my prison. I might mention a pair of gloves, letters, books taken from locked chests, and found in the morning on the floor. Some others, indeed, I have not found, nor do I know what has become of them; but as to those which go a missing when I am absent, these may have been taken from me by men, who I verily believe have the keys of all my trunks. Thus you see that I cannot defend any thing from my enemies, nor from the devil, except my will, with which I shall never consent to learn any thing from him, or from his followers, or indeed to have any familiarity with himself, or his magicians. It is observed by Ficino, that though such may move the phantasy, yet, without the intellect, they have no authority nor force; because that depends immediately upon God. The same thing may be collected from many other philosophers, both Platonists, and Peripatetics. ... But perhaps it will appear to some that I am contradicting myself, since, in my dialogue of *The Messenger*, I represent myself as conversing with a spirit; a thing which I would never have done, even had it been in my power. That dialogue was composed by me many years ago, in obedi-

† Orig. *At twenty-three o'clock.* The Italians reckoned time from the setting of the sun. The first hour after sunset was one o'clock, and so they counted on till four and twenty, that is, till the next sunset again.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

ence to a prince; and it was thought no harm to treat the subject in a poetical manner.* Since that time, however, my enemies have seemed desirous to make a jest of me, and, by rendering me an example of infelicity, have occasioned that to become in some sort real, which was once fictitious. That, at the period I am speaking of, I was not subject to any misery of this sort, may be learned from a strict examination of those gentlemen in whose houses I lodged. My proofs, however, must rather be drawn from reason, than testimony; though such testimonies would not be wanting, were it not that truth is oppressed by my enemies, who are many, powerful, and implacable; and I wish not to please them, except by means suited to a Christian. But God knows that I was never either a magician nor a Lutheran; and that I never read heretical books, nor those which treat of necromancy, or any prohibited art. Nor was I ever pleased with the conversation of Hugonots, nor did I praise their doctrines; but, on the contrary, have always blamed them by my words and writings. Neither had I ever an opinion contrary to the holy catholic church, though I will not deny that I have sometimes lent too ready an ear to the reasonings of philosophers; not, however, in such a guise as to forbear to humble my intellect before divines, or to be more desirous of con-

* The prince by whose command the *Messenger* was written, must have been Vincenzo Gonzaga, to whom the first edition, 1582, is dedicated. It was certainly finished in 1580, though it might have been sketched before the author's imprisonment.

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

tradiction than of instruction. But now my infelicity has confirmed my faith; and, amidst all my misfortunes, I have this one consolation, that I am free from doubts, though I have many desires. And, if ever the fear of death has constrained me to injure myself or truth, such a terror has now no influence, for I love not life, except attended with those things, which might be granted me by a gracious prince; by a prince whose desire it would be to annul the memory of the false, and let the truth remain; not for the purpose of blaming others, but for his own, and my satisfaction. Meanwhile I am unhappy, nor will I conceal my misery, in order that you may remedy it with all your force, with all your diligence, and with all your faith. Know then, that, in addition to the wonders of the Folletto, which I may reserve for our correspondence at some future period, I have many nocturnal alarms. For, even when awake, I have seemed to behold small flames in the air, and sometimes my eyes sparkle in such a manner, that I dread the loss of sight, and I have visibly seen sparks issue from them. I have seen also, in the middle of the tent bed, shades of rats, which, by natural reason, could not be there: I have heard frightful noises; and often in my ears are the sounds of hissing, tingling, ringing of bells, and sounds like that of a clock. Often there is a beating for an hour; and sometimes, in my sleep, it seems as if a horse threw himself upon me, and I have afterwards found myself languid and fatigued. I have dreaded the falling-sickness, apoplexy, and blindness; I have had headaches, but not excessive; pains, but not very violent,

Symptoms of his disease.

of the intestines, the side, the thighs, and legs: I have been weakened by vomiting, dysentery, and fever. Amidst so many terrors and pains, there appeared to me, in the air, the image of the Glorious Virgin, with her Son in her arms, sphered in a circle of coloured vapours, so that I ought by no means to despair of her grace. And though this might easily be a phantasy, because I am frenetic, disturbed by various phantasms, and full of infinite melancholy; nevertheless, by the grace of God, I can sometimes *cohibere assensum*, (withhold my assent,) which, as Cicero remarks, being the operation of a sound mind, I am inclined to believe it was a miracle of the Virgin.* But, if I am not deceived,

* The visions of Tasso, in the hospital of St Anne, have a striking analogy with those which Benvenuto Cellini relates, as having been beheld by himself, when confined in a gloomy dungeon at Rome. Tasso and he were both possessed of the most vivid imagination, and their habitual occupations had been such, as to give an undue influence to the representative faculty. "The cases of delirium (says Dr Crichton,) which have been produced by intense application to such subjects of study as give an extraordinary degree of force to the imagination, are very numerous. Representations of the mind, when frequently renewed by acts of imagination, at last acquire a degree of vividness which surpasses those derived from external objects; and, as the principal quality of a mental perception, or representation, which makes us believe in the reality of the object, or objects, which it represents, is the clearness of its parts, it is not wonderful that men of genius, who often confine their attention to one branch of study, should be more exposed to such illusions than any other class of people." *On Mental Derangement*, vol. II. p. 65. If this transition from the real to an ideal world takes place in such people, sometimes even in the day, and surrounded by objects, how much more vivid must be their conceptions in darkness and in solitude? In the night, the reason of all men is enfeebled, and solitude has the threefold effect of creating *illusion*, by the necessity the soul has of exercise; of rendering it permanent by the removal of external objects, which might disturb the train of thought in the mind of the melancholy visionary; and, finally, of giving it, by this permanence, a degree of vividness which is unnatural to any perception, but such as are derived from the external senses. If we add to this the ten-

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

the source of my frenzy is to be attributed to some confections which I eat three years ago; since from that period I date this new infirmity, which joined itself to the first, produced by a similar cause, but which was neither so long nor so difficult to cure. Indeed, if my infirmity be not altogether incurable, it at least has much resemblance to those which are never cured." Tasso proceeds in this melancholy letter to observe, that the nature of his distemper was such, that it could only be owing to witchcraft; and expresses his anxious desire to be removed from a place where so much power over him was permitted to enchanters. The letter concludes with much reason and eloquence; and the poet informs his friend, that he intended, the very evening on which this was written, to compose a sonnet; a proof of that mysterious

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dency of misfortune to awaken or strengthen superstition; and, in the case of Tasso, the long familiarity of his genius with magical creation, we shall not wonder that he mistook his phantasies for real existence.

Benvenuto talks, like Tasso, of a spirit, who came to comfort and converse with him in his dungeon. He tells us that this spirit, who had the appearance of a beautiful youth, carried him once from this dungeon, to see the rising sun; and that, in the sun, he saw a Christ upon the cross, of the same matter as that luminary, and of so gracious and pleasing an aspect, that no human imagination could form even a faint idea of his beauty. This soon gave place to "the figure of a lovely Virgin Mary, who appeared to sit with her Son in her arms, in a graceful attitude, and even to smile. She stood between two angels, of so divine a beauty, that imagination could not even form an idea of such perfection. I likewise, (continues Cellini,) saw in the same sun, a figure dressed in sacerdotal robes; this figure turned its back to me, and looked towards the blessed Virgin holding Christ in her arms." Benvenuto adds that this was St Peter, who pleaded his cause, and that these wonderful phenomena having appeared before him about eight minutes, vanished from his sight. *Life of Benvenuto Cellini*, vol. I. p. 499.

alienation of mind on one subject, while on every other it remains unfaded and entire. *

Of the Folletto, or sprite, Tasso had already, a few days before, given an account to Cataneo. "I must now," says he, (in a letter, dated the day of the Nativity,) "give you some account of my sprite. The little thief has stolen from me many crowns, I know not what number, for I do not, like misers, keep an account of them, but, perhaps, they may amount to twenty. He puts all my books topsy-turvy, opens my chests, and steals my keys, so that I can keep nothing. I am unhappy at all times, but especially during the night, nor do I know if my disease be frenzy, or what is its nature. I find no better remedy than living fully, and satisfying my appetite, that I may sleep profoundly. [As to food, indeed, by the grace of God, I can eat abundantly, for the object of the magician seems not to have been to impede my digestion, but my contemplation;] often, however, I fast, not from motives of devotion, but because my stomach is full; but at such times I cannot sleep. Look upon me with compassion, and know that I am unhappy, because the world is unjust." †

The thefts of the devil, or rather of Torquato's devilish attendants, were at last so troublesome, that he was forced to deposit what little property he had in the hands of his friends. This we learn from a letter to Eneas Tasso, of which

* The original letter may be found, Appendix, (No. XXX.) † *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 355.

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

the following extract was first published by Serassi: "I have hitherto (says he) seen no symptoms of a change to the better, or rather things are getting worse, because my chum, the devil, not having that quiet possession of me which he expected, is become a manifest thief of my money. * He deprives me of it when I sleep, and opens my chests, so that I can guard it no longer. And though he has hitherto stolen from me discreetly, I am determined to put no confidence in him, and, therefore, I send your lordship the remainder of the money given me by the Prince of Molsetta, by the Prince of Mantua, Sig. Paul Grillo, and the Marquis of Este. In all it amounts to twenty-four scudi of gold, two sequins, and forty ducats. I pray your lordship that you will give me advice of having received them, and try to deliver me from the hands of the devil, along with my books, which are in no degree safer than my writings. And, if the thing were not certain, if it were not so great and extraordinary, as naturally to excite pity, I might multiply supplications. It is enough, however, to recal the intimacy which subsisted between your and my father, and this, I believe, will, without

* It is proper to remark, that Tasso's idea of being beset and besieged by the devil is not to be considered as a hallucination peculiar to himself, since the idea of possession was prevalent among the most distinguished philosophers and physicians of his age. All of these, in their classifications of insanity, enumerate the *obsessi* and *demoniaci*. In Italy, this notion was peculiarly vigorous, owing to the frequent practice of exorcism by the clergy.

other motive, induce you not to spare your influence to liberate me from this most uncomfortable prison." *

Don Cæsar, the presumptive heir of the dukedom of Ferrara, being at Rome, Tasso wrote him several letters, entreating his interest to liberate him, which he would willingly have granted, had it not been the dread of offending Alphonso. Sixtus V. also recommended his release, † and different great personages repeated their applications. "Oh Signior Maurice! (writes our poet to Cataneo) oh Signior Maurice! when shall that day arrive, when I may respire under the open firmament, without beholding always a door locked before me, when I have need of a physician or confessor." ‡ As anxiety increases with hope, our poet, probably

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 377. The Sig. Paul Grillo was a brother of Father Angelo Grillo, one of the most active friends of our poet, and to whose good offices with the Prince of Mantua, he was principally indebted for his liberty. Besides money, Sig. Paul, at the earnest request of Tasso, presented him with an emerald, (vol. IX. pp. 52, 60, 76, 268, 389, 391,) a stone which, in that age, was considered as having wonderful properties: "It is said there is such great virtue in the emerald, (says Renou,) that it not only preserves from the falling sickness, all those who wear it on their fingers, set in gold, but likewise strengthens the memory." Cardan, too, in his *Præcepta ad Filios*, says, "Smaragdum collo pueris suspendite, ob comitialem morbum: cerebrum enim confirmat." Tasso was also favoured, by one of his friends, with a piece of an unicorn, for what purpose I have not found leisure nor inclination to investigate. Those who are curious, will find the subject discussed by Bochart, Gesner, and Aldrovandus. See, too, Spenser, *F. Q.* book II. c. V. st. 10. "Il pezzo dell' unicorno (writes Tasso,) mi fu dato; ma tolto poi con modo più insolito assai, e quasi direi maraviglioso, se Io non avessi veduti altri simili miracoli." *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 83.

† "Il Papa (writes Tasso in a letter, dated twenty-ninth March, 1586,) s'è degnato d'interporla, come V. S. potra intendere da Monsig. Papio." It is probable that Tasso was imposed on in this matter. See *above*, p. 167.

‡ Vol. IX. p. 357.

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

from the intensity of his mental agitation, was assailed at this time by a sudden and alarming fever. Such was the violence of the distemper, that, on the fourth day, the physicians began to fear, and on the seventh, to despair of his life. The body of Tasso had been so enfeebled, that he was incapable of struggling with any disorder; and he was unable to bear those medicines which might have assisted him in repelling it. "Now (says Serassi) when he found himself, as it were, reduced to an extremity, he recommended himself to the intercession of the most Blessed Virgin, our Lady; and that with such confidence and ardent devotion, that the compassionate Virgin appearing to him, visibly cured him, and, as it were, instantly restored him. Of this miracle, or grace, as it may, perhaps, be more properly called, besides the vows which he fulfilled in the sanctuaries of Mantua and of Loretto, we have a most certain testimony in the following beautiful sonnet, among his rhymes:" *

Tasso thinks himself miraculously cured of a sickness.

I languish'd sick, benumb'd by torpid sleep,
Each vital sense had now begun to fail;
Fever'd at once and chill'd, my cheek was pale,
And through my frame, the blood refus'd to creep:
When thou, oh Mary! through the air's blue deep,
With golden light attir'd, as with a veil,
Didst come; while wondering Death durst not assail,
But fled; and Pain his captive ceas'd to keep.
Nor didst thou come, oh Virgin pure! alone,
But holy Benedict, amid the rays,
Bright, on thy right, in holy vestments shone.

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 380. *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 266, 251; VI. p. 350.

But now my heart to thee alone, and lays
Sacred shall be, till I in heaven gaze
Again on Thee, and praise with sweeter tone! *

Among the other illustrious intercessors for the liberty of Tasso, was Don Vincenzo Gonzaga, Prince of Mantua, who, in summer, 1586, came to Ferrara, to compliment Don Cæsar and his lady (whose niece he himself had married) on their nuptials. Not only the Princess of Mantua, but her mother-in-law, was desirous to have our poet at their court; and the prince assured Alphonso, that he would not allow him to depart from Mantua, without obtaining permission. Upon this condition the Duke of Ferrara consented to his liberty about the end of June. Constantino, fearing that the sudden tidings of actual deliverance might make a very

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* Egro Io languiva, e d'alto sonno avvinta
Ogni mia possa avea d'intorno al core;
E pien d'orrido gelo, e pien d'ardore
Giacea, con guancia di pallor dipinta.
Quando di luce incoronata e cinta,
E sfavillando del divino ardore,
Maria, pronta scendesti al mio dolore,
Perchè non fosse l'alma oppressa, e vinta.
E Benedetto fra que' raggi, e lampi,
Vidi alla destra tua, nel sacro velo
Scolastica splendea dall' altra parte.
Or sacro questo core, e queste carte,
Mentre più bella Io ti contemplo in cielo,
Regina a Te, che mi risani e scampi.

See, too, a madrigal addressed to the Blessed Virgin, vol. VI. 367. *Non potea la Natura*, &c.

CHAP. XVIII.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

violent impression on his friend, went to St Annes, and told him that he had every reason to believe, that he would be released in a few days. Tasso had been so often deceived, that he looked forward to the period with anxiety equal to his impatience. In a billet, written to Constantino, on the first of July, he thus expresses himself: "Your courtesy, my friend, has so much accustomed me to your dear and frequent visits, that I have been all day long at the window expecting your coming to see and comfort me as you are wont. But since you have not come, I (in order not to remain altogether without consolation) visit you with this, and the ambassador with the inclosed sonnet, written with a trembling hand, and in such a manner, that he will not, perhaps, have less difficulty in reading, than I had in writing it." * On the evening of the third of July, our bard was visited by the Prince of Mantua, who asked of him some verses on a particular subject. He expressed at the same time his esteem of his genius and virtues; and told him that he would conduct him to Mantua upon his return. Tasso was almost sleepless that night, from a desire to gratify his patron; but, accustomed to disappointments, he could not lay aside his fears, so that in sending, on the following day, the verses to Constantino, he entreats him to keep the prince in mind of what he had promised so benignly. "The desire," says he, "which I had to serve the most serene Prince

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 479.

of Mantua, with regard to the verses which he yesterday, in your presence, commanded me to make, has held me almost sleepless during the night. For I have not been able to repose till I had produced the birth, or the abortion, which I send inclosed in a letter, that I write to his highness. I beseech you to present it to him, and to put him in mind of his benignant promise to conduct me with him on his return to Mantua. No other circumstance can, at this period, I say, not render me happy, but diminish, in the least degree, my constant melancholy. From St Annes, the 4th of July, 1586." *

The prince received the verses with courtesy, and corresponding in his turn with the readiness of the poet, he procured from the duke an order to Sig. Giovambatista Vincenzi, (who had succeeded Mosti, in the priorship of the hospital, †) to liberate his prisoner. This event took place on the fifth or sixth of July, 1586, after a confinement of seven years, two months, and several days. Tasso felt all that joy, which one in his infirm state of mind and body could receive, for, alas! "himself was his own dungeon." During the short time he staid at Ferrara, prior to the departure of the prince, he lived with Constantino, in the house of Albizi, the Tuscan ambassador, without caring to

Is released from confinement.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 480. The letter to the Prince of Mantua, and the verses, may be found, vol. X. p. 65. The latter, to say truth, are not excellent.

† *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 40.

CHAP. XVIII. A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

visit the people of the city. With that carelessness, which in the affairs of life was characteristic of our poet, he was at no pains to collect his clothes or books. Serassi is at some pains in narrating where his trunks and property were left, and it appears that they were dispersed in different places.* "In place," says he, "of sending before him to Mantua his most valuable property, he left part in St Annes, part in the possession of Sig. Borso Argenti, and part in the house of the ambassador of Tuscany. He had resolved also to deposit with his friend Vincenzo Malpiglio, treasurer of the duke, and a very learned gentleman, two large chests of books, a portmanteau, and a little cypress casket, in which were some writings of great importance. This, however, he seems not to have done, as I find no trace of these chests being sent to him by Malpiglio. On the contrary, I think it may be inferred from one of his letters, that they remained at St Annes, in custody of the prior; from whom he could not recover them till after many months, and with some difficulty, through the favour of Sig. Don Cæsar, and the affectionate attention of the Cavalier Pignata, his gentleman." † Of the truth of all these assertions, Serassi produces vouchers; nor trifling as the detail may seem, is it altogether without its use. The inattention of Tasso to the little circumstances, which render life comfortable, was one of the principal causes of his poverty and dependence. There may,

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 384.

† *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 396, 130, 437.

perhaps, appear to be something incompatible between a regard to the common concerns of life, and the transports of poetry, or the soarings of science; but it is to be doubted that many young persons have increased or produced this habit of inattention, from an idea that it is an effect, or proof of genius. The history of many illustrious men testifies that worldly prudence is perfectly consistent with the sublimest intellectual powers; and many melancholy proofs exist, that a man may be imprudent or dissipated, without having first-rate talents for painting, poetry, or music. Let me caution, therefore, all young persons from considering indiscretion, or want of foresight, as a test of, or constant attendant upon, genius; and let me remind them, that the flight of the eagle may be then most steady, and most high, when he has fed himself, and prepared his nest below. *

* Tasso, when too late, seems to have been sensible of the truth of these sentiments. "Attendo (says he,) a'miei studj quanto posso, ma son' impedito dall' infermità, e dalla povertà: laonde ho conchiuso, che sia assai vero quel detto, che *prius oportet ditari, postea philosophari;* e s'io fossi nella dottrina simile a Talete, penserei di arricchire così col vino, come egli fece con l'olio," vol. X. p. 347.

In a letter, too, to George Alario, concerning his tragedy, Tasso says, "Io vi porrò la mano innanzi le feste; accioch' in qualche occasione si potesse rappresentare, o stampar piuttosto; ch'io amerei meglio riempirmi la borsa, che è vota, e sgonfia più che le vesciche bucate, che vedere tutti gli spettacoli del mondo." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 283.

CHAPTER XIX.

Tasso leaves Ferrara, and goes to Mantua.—His comfortable situation there, and literary employments.—Publishes his father's poem Floridante.—Becomes tired of Mantua.—Miscellaneous circumstances.—Is invited to read ethics and criticism at Genoa.—Visits Bergamo.—Tires of that city, and wishes to go to Rome.—Returns to Mantua.—Publishes his Torrismondo.—Remarks on this tragedy.

A. D. 1586—1587.
Aet. 42—43.

CHAP. XIX.
A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

About the middle of July, 1586, Tasso departed from Ferrara, in the company of the Prince of Mantua, his deliverer and protector. This took place without his having seen Alphonso, a meeting, which, in the minds of both, could only have awakened disagreeable ideas.* On his arrival at Mantua, such was his reception, particularly from the young Princess Leonora de' Medici, that he was in high spirits, a

* *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 130, 251, 279.

thing which we shall find was usual at his first residence any where, and which was soon succeeded by depression and disappointment. Tasso seems ever to have forgot that the ardour of reception must soon subside, and that, in the familiar commerce of life, those demonstrations of admiration and respect, which flame out on a first arrival, must gradually sink into a moderate and gentle heat. He considered not that man, who is a selfish being occupied with his own concerns, will often, from interest and self-love, and still more frequently from hurry, indolence, and inattention, neglect to pay the tribute of admiration, which he confesses to be really due. The old Duke William, who was a wise and good prince, was pleased that his son should thus take under his protection a man so unfortunate and so illustrious, and gave orders that apartments should be provided for our poet in the palace, and that he should be furnished with every convenience which might render his situation comfortable. The prince made him be cloathed as became his worth and dignity; "and I find," says Serassi, "that, amongst other things, he presented him with a most beautiful doublet, and a pair of perfumed silken hose." * Of the satisfaction of Tasso at this period, we have proof from several of

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 385. This perhaps might be a princely present. We are told by Stowe, that the Earl of Oxford, in 1574, brought from Italy, for Queen Elizabeth, "a paire of perfumed gloves," which she valued highly, and took such delight in, that she was pictured with them upon her hands, and for many years after, adds Stowe, it was called "The Earl of Oxford's Perfume."

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

his letters. "I am in Mantua (says he, writing to Licino,) lodged by the most serene prince, and waited on by his servants, as I myself could desire; and in all respects am caressed, as pleases his highness. Here I find good meat, good fruits, excellent bread, wines sharp and brisk, such as my father delighted in; admirable fish and game, and especially good air; but, perhaps, that of Bergamo is better."*

Satisfaction of Tasso with Mantua.

"I will stay (says he in another letter) at Mantua, because my chamber is most beautiful, and the prince most courteous, so that I hope to enjoy myself all this summer, and winter likewise."† At this court, too, he found an agreeable society of literary gentlemen, and his hope of health was revived by his confidence in the skill of the physician Cavallara, who gave him some pills for the purpose of restoring his memory. This gentleman seems to have been a physician according to Tasso's taste, as he dealt in agreeable confectionary medicines; and a letter is extant among the works of the bard, dated at St Annes, in which he gives him great thanks for a jar of very delicate candied citrons. Cavallara, however, began to mutter something about a cathartic, to remedy his other complaints; but Tasso, who looked upon such medicines with horrour, delayed this till spring, under the pretence of not interrupting the sports of autumn. In spring he would no doubt find a new pretext. In addition to his want of memory, were joined several other complaints,

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 265. † *Ibid.* p. 481.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

"but the greatest (says he) and most distressing is the frenzy; so that I am always disturbed by vexing thoughts, and many imaginations, and many phantasms." *

Notwithstanding the deplorable state of his health, this indefatigable man did not cease his application to his studies, but corrected and amplified his old, and composed new writings. He made several important changes in his dialogues *of the Messenger: of Nobility: and of Dignity*; and in October, wrote a long letter in answer to a question in politics, proposed by the Duke of Urbino. † In September, he began to refit and complete the poem of *Floridante*, a work which had been begun by his father on the twenty-fourth of November, 1563, and which had been left unfinished. Its subject, as I have already mentioned, was an episode taken from the *Amadigi*, embellished, however, and amplified, so as to form a new work. ‡ Tasso shortened the plan, filled up some empty spaces, corrected the whole, and added twenty-five stanzas in praise of some distinguished females. His friend Constantini supplied it with arguments, and caused it to be printed at Bologna at his own expence. This work was dedicated by our poet to Duke William of

The Floridante.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 258, and in another letter he says, "Il maggior di tutti i mali è la frenesia, per la quale son malinconicissimo, è accompagnata da grande smemorataggine. Nell' altre cose son quasisano. E ho così buono appetito, che mangiando la mattina compiutamente potrei cenare a quattro, e a cinque ore; ma non prima. Ese non ceno, soglio veggiar la maggior parte della notte." *Ibid.* p. 98.

† *Ibid.* p. 463.

‡ See *above*, vol. I. p. 120.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1586. Aet. 42.

Mantua, in a letter written with much elegance and sensibility. *

About this time also, Tasso, at the request of the princess of Mantua, resumed and new modelled his tragedy of *Torrismondo*. It had been begun in January, 1574, but relinquished, as we have seen, for the purpose of completing his *Jerusalem*. At the period of its resumption, it consisted of a single act, and a part of two scenes; these were now considerably altered by the author, though by no means improved. The tragedy was resumed in the beginning of November, 1586, and by the end of that month was almost concluded. † Such speed of execution seems to suppose facility in composition; but the poet informs a friend, that, when employed about the first chorus, he could scarcely, with great exertions, produce a few verses, though kept awake during the greater part of the night. ‡ He must thus have made up in industry what he wanted in ease; and given, not the first ambrosial droppings, but the gross and muddy dregs of genius, crushed too severely. Among the books which Tasso was desirous of obtaining to assist him in his tragical composition, were a Latin Euripides and Sophocles. ‖ The first of these he failed of procuring, but with respect to Sophocles he was more fortunate, and there is some humour in his account of his equipment with this

Tasso resumes and finishes his tragedy.

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* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 51. Appendix, (No. XXXI.)

† *Ibid.* vol. IX. p. 494.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 87.

‖ *Ibid.* p, 96.

author. "My object at present (says he,) is to finish my tragedy, which, in truth, keeps me very busy. I shall finish it with two copies of Sophocles, but without an Euripides; so that I may at least learn, on this occasion, the benefit of exchange, by which we give what is superfluous for what is necessary." * The reader of this poem has reason to regret that its author was not as unprovided with the works of Sophocles as with those of Euripides; as he has injured a great part of it by the closeness of its imitation to the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, of the former of these poets. On the fourteenth of December, the tragedy was finished, † and Tasso gave it the title of *Torrismondo;* that being the name of the king of the Goths, who is the principal character of the piece. In the original fragment, the hero of the play is named Galealto, and his friend Torindo; names which, in the complete tragedy, are changed into Torrismondo and Germondo. Our bard seems to have been fond of sounding words, and in this, as in other respects, never any writer corresponded more exactly to the description of a poet as given by Horace:

> Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
> Magna sonaturum, des nominis hujus honorem.

Among the other compositions of Tasso, written at this period, was a long consolatory letter to the widow of his friend Albizi, the ambassador of Tuscany. ‡ It was during

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 87. † *Ibid.* p. 496. et seq. ‡ *Ibid.* p. 8, 500.

CHAP. XIX.

A D. 1587. Aet. 43.

a long time fashionable for learned men to consider themselves as called upon, by the demise of any illustrious person, to heap together a number of common-places on the mutability of fortune, the misery of life, and the felicity of death. On this occasion, however, Tasso was really afflicted, and there is heard, among the dirges which the literary undertakers hired out at every splendid funeral, something of the true plaint of nature. He also, in this busy winter, added a second part to his *Secretary;* and, with his former treatise on that subject, dedicated it to Don Cæsar of Este, in a letter written on the seventeenth of January, 1587.*

Tasso tires of Mantua.

The time was now elapsed, when Tasso, after the first novel sensations, was accustomed to become tired of his situation. What created his disgust, was his confinement to Mantua, unless permission was obtained from the prince, and some idea that he was not esteemed and honoured as he ought to have been. "I have written to your reverence (says he, in an epistle to his father's friend, John Angelo Papio,†) a long letter containing information of my condition, and I sent it off by the same conveyance that transmitted me yours, which had been expected so many days. But I deem it not superfluous to repeat the contents of that letter, lest, perhaps, it may not have reached you. I am almost free, as I may walk through all Mantua; but I am infirm as usual, and exhausted by my infirmity, which is not only

* *Opere,* vol. IX. p. 132.

† See *above,* vol. I. p. 25.

a maady of the body, but of the mind. I have tried few human remedies, and the few of which I have made trial, have done me no good; nevertheless, it is my intention to repeat them. But, though I despair of the skill or humanity of physicians, I ought not to despair of the Divine Grace; and hence, I would willingly journey to Loretto, as a pilgrim, to absolve a vow, and thence to Rome. I know not, indeed, if my strength, which is as yet scarcely restored, would be sufficient for this, but our Lord will aid me. I am without money for the journey; and, though I would not refuse the liberality of any one, I am a greater enemy to importunity than to poverty. This is one of the difficulties of the undertaking; the other is the fear lest the most serene Duke of Ferrara should cause me to be detained in his states, because I departed without kissing his hand; nor can I be relieved from this doubt, except by the authority of the most serene prince [of Mantua.*] Hence, your good offices with his highness seem necessary, as well as the recommendations of the Patriarch Gonzaga, provided your requests can effect more with him than my prayers have done, as he continues to advise me to remain. † And willingly should I have

* On the subject of being detained on his departure from Mantua, Tasso wrote a supplication to the empress. Appendix (No. XXXII.)

† Tasso appears to have thought, that Scipio Gonzaga had much influence at the court of Mantua, and indeed he seems to have been on good terms with the prince; but, if we may believe Erythraeus, he had grievously offended the old Duke William. This writer, mentioning Gonzaga's being made Patriarch of Jerusalem, adds, "Verum, cum ad summam amplitudinem remigio, ut aiunt, veloque contenderet, paululum ad saxum navem offendit. Venerat ea tempestate Romam, religionis et officii erga Gregorium

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

yielded to his counsels, provided he had done his utmost that I might live in this court, if not contented, (because no content can now ever dwell in a mind like mine, disturbed as it is, and full of a thousand disquietudes,) at least consoled from so many calamities, so many vexations undergone, so many losses sustained. This consolation must be connected with quiet in my studies, with health, and with the favour of his highness; none of which things I possess, and yet the Signior Patriarch is of opinion that I should remain. Try therefore, if the words of your reverence can produce a better effect than my letters have done; or if, by any other influence than his, I may go to Rome without fear of being detained. It seems to me, however, that his aid would be the most powerful, especially if M. George [Alario steward of Gonzaga] should come hither to me as was promised. From the most serene Duke of Mantua, I have requested pardon, but received no answer. The serene prince is very courteous in his replies to me, but I know not what ill fortune of mine hinders every good effect. I am neither so young, so healthy, nor so fit for labour, as to have no need to value his favour, but the will of men cannot be constrained.

XIII. Pont. Max. gratia, Gulielmus Gonzaga, Dux Mantuae, quicum illi, de quibusdam castris, lites erant graves et magnae. Perfecit Scipio, auctoritate et gratiâ, ut Duci, ex templo Xenodochii Teutonum ad circum agonalem exeunti, dica per viatorem deferretur; quamobrem Dux, quanta maxima dici potest irâ inflammatus, tantam injuriam questus est apud Pontificem: qui Pont. quo satis Duci fieret, jussit Scipionem in carcerem condi. Sed a Sixto V. qui Gregorio successerat, primis fere comitiis, Cardinalis est declaratus." *Pinacotheca*, II. 11.

Hence, I would chuse, as the smallest evil, to visit Rome, if liberty could be obtained, nor should I be alarmed at infirmity and poverty, which unite in impeding me. I write too freely, but I write to Sig. Papio, from whom there is no danger that the liberty of my pen should hurt me, or hinder that of the body. You have many friends, and many ways of assisting me in Mantua, on my journey, and in Rome, so that you may fix on that which seems most suitable. I shall kiss, in your name, the hands of the Sig. Commendator St George, who is a principal gentleman of this court, but I have not yet seen him. I kiss the hands of your reverence. A tragedy of mine may probably be shewn you by the Sig. Patriarch Gonzaga. Farewell. From Mantua the 21st February, 1587." *

"The most serene prince, (says Tasso, in another of his letters,) has liberated me in some degree, because I may go through all Mantua, with a servant whom he has given me. This, however, is not true liberty, because I cannot depart, and change my country; a thing, however, which is necessary, as in this climate I cannot be cured. I am still frenetic, as at Ferrara, and I have all my other ills; whether it be a defect in the air, or wines, or something else. I wish to be cured completely; and since it is not in the power of the prince to restore my health, he ought at least to free me, that I may try what M. Alessandro da Città can do for

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 251.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

me, who formerly attempted my recovery in the court of Cardinal Albano. Never have I known a physician so kind and so discreet; he did nothing but what I wished, and always gave me (as is proper) only the most delightful medicines. I still remember with pleasure his sweet acidulous syrups, which might have revived a corpse; and his pills with gold, which he said were somewhat burthensome for the stomach." * That Tasso, too, thought himself neglected, appears (as well as his susceptibility on this account,) from a passage of a letter to Ascanio Mori. "I cannot," says he, "live in a city where all the nobility do not yield me the first place, or allow, at least, that I should be their equal in every external demonstration of respect. This is my humour, or my principle." † No one, surely, was ever more worthy of respect and admiration than Tasso, as, in addition to his virtues and illustrious birth, he was ennobled by genius, which levels all distinctions. Irritated as he was by disease, and by misfortunes, one may pardon his idea that it was possible he could be slighted; but the same apology cannot be formed for many literary men, who would exclude every human being from attention but themselves. Let the man of genius nourish that internal sentiment of dignity, which, as it is one of the sweetest, so is it one of the most valuable of our emo-

Tasso thinks himself neglected at Mantua.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 274.

† *Ibid.* p. 99. At the conclusion of this high-toned letter, or billet, Tasso says, "Questa sera ho cenato parcamente. Però prego, V. S. se ha pomo, o altra cosa sì fatta da finir la cena, che me ne voglia far parte, e le bacio le mani." See also p. 503.

tions; nor let him repine if he be occasionally less distinguished than ignorant title, or witless wealth. Satisfied with the possession of a noble and creative mind, let him not envy that species of homage which is exacted by rank and fortune; nor selfishly think that in himself ought to be concentrated all the endowments of nature, and all the enjoyments of life. * Tasso went so far as to threaten the world, a kind of menace of which the late Samuel Johnson has shown the absurdity. He compares it, I think, to the conduct of a person who, when he was offended, revenged him-

* The following passage is (we are told by the editor of Burns,) contained in a manuscript book, in which this poet recorded his private feelings and observations. It appears from it, that, not contented with the glorious privilege of genius, he was indignant at a little external complaisance of a friend, to a person who had none of his advantages. This person was, it seems, a *blockhead*, that is to say, a being whose intellect had never been ravished with a discovery, whose fancy had never been enchanted with a vision, whose heart had never glowed with an emotion, nor his eye been watered by a sympathetic tear. "There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin, than the comparison how a man of genius, nay of avowed worth, is received every where, with the reception which a mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets. I imagine a man of abilities, his heart glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving *honour to whom honour is due*; he meets at a great man's table, a squire something, or a sir somebody; he knows the *noble* landlord at heart, gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes beyond perhaps any one at table; yet, how will it mortify him to see a fellow, whose abilities would scarcely have made an *eight-penny tailor*, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice, that are with-held from the son of genius and poverty?

"The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect, and love him. He shewed so much attention, engrossing attention, one day to the only blockhead at table, (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunderpate, and myself,) that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance, but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting."—*Works*, vol. I. p. 154.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

self by sleeping all night on a bridge in the open air. "Such (says our poet) is my infelicity, that I have resolved not to compose, until the world repents of the wrongs it has done, and which it does me every day. Yes! if I cannot live otherwise, I will form such a resolution as shall astonish every one, and I shall retire into an hermitage." *

On the third of January, this year, a young woman was beheaded at Bologna, together with her lover, for the crime of poisoning her own father. As, besides being very beautiful, she behaved with intrepidity, many Italian poets lamented her fate in rhyme, and celebrated, says Serassi, (who, even in this case, cannot refrain from compliment,) "the courage, and wonderful strength of mind of this marvellous young lady." † Of these bards, one dedicated his work to Tasso. This gentleman, in his preface to the poem, tells his reader, that he was led first to compose, and afterwards to publish these rhymes, "from good zeal, seeing the young lady go to the dreadful punishment of her *error* in a manner so constant and intrepid that it was sufficient to astonish

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 500. It must have been at some such moment of despondence, that Tasso wrote the following affecting lines, which have been attributed to him, but which I have not met with in his works:—

Tu che ne vai in Pindo,
Ivi pende mia cetra ad un cipresso,
Salutala in mia nome, e dille poi
Ch'io son dagl' anni, e da fortuna oppresso.

† *Vita del Tasso*, p. 393.

every body, and to melt the hardest heart." Tasso received the dedication very courteously, only wishing the author a more fortunate subject on which to exercise his genius.*

The carnival at Mantua was this year extremely splendid; and our poet, who delighted in masques, and spectacles, was considerably amused. He even tells a friend, that he was in danger of becoming enamoured of some one among the store of ladies, whose bright eyes rained influence on the occasion. "Here," says he, "is going on a most delightful carnival, where are abundance of beautiful and most graceful ladies. Never was I more displeased at not being a very happy poet than at present. Indeed, were it not the fear of being considered either as too susceptible, or as inconstant, in making a new choice, I should already have deliberated where to repose my thoughts. Perhaps, however, I confide too much to this letter."† These amorous ideas were dissipated by the arrival of Lent, during which Tasso addicted himself to the study of the fathers. His principal favourite was St Augustine, a writer possessed of a vigorous understanding, an elevated imagination, and a tender heart. He was desirous also of obtaining a present of a copy of Aquinas. "Nor would I care," says he, "although it were not new, but I know not where to find a man so liberal." No book, indeed, (considering the age in which it was written,) affords such an astonishing specimen of the

* Vol. IX. p. 3.

† Vol. IX. p. 278.

CHAP. XIX.
A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

fertility and subtility of the human mind; nor is there a work, that I can at present think of, in which a philosopher will, for a short time, find a greater fund of amusement.*

One of the circumstances which greatly harassed Tasso, at this period, (and which is a heavy tax usually paid by celebrity,) was the indiscreetness and importunity of visitors and correspondents. Our bard complaining, in a letter to a friend, of the assiduity of his brethren of mankind in this way, concludes in the following humourous manner: "For this misery, I know not that there would be a better remedy than a servant, who could distinguish by the smell, as we do melons, the agreeable from the tasteless, and should exclude the latter, by saying that I am not at home, or occupied in the service of his highness. He should open also all my letters, and only show me such as are sent with some gift, or which mention some promise, or good news. The others he should burn, nor allow the tidings of death or misfortune to reach me; for by these my soul has been filled with melancholy, and my ears with complaints." †

During the spring and summer of this year, Tasso was engaged to visit different great personages; and, amongst other divertisements, spent some days at Marmirolo, with the

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* IX. p. 507. In a letter from Ferrara, dated 12th March, 1584, Tasso thus expresses himself with regard to Aquinas: "S'io avessi l'opere di San Tommaso, non mi *leverei da sedere, finchè Io non l'avessi lette tutte, se non quanto le opportunità naturali ricercassero.*" X. p. 362. Those only who are acquainted with the Atlantic writings of the angelic doctor will be able to appreciate the horrors of this achievement.

† Vol. IX. p. 338.

prince of Mantua, and a select company of gentlemen and ladies. I am sensible that many of these details are trivial, but I feel reluctant to suppress a single fact, however unimportant, which has been taken notice of by Serassi, and, besides, they keep up the continuity of the story. The prince having an intention of visiting Florence this summer, promised to take Tasso along with him, a circumstance with which our poet was greatly delighted, as he would thus have an opportunity of seeing many of his friends; and particularly of paying his respects to the grand duchess, who had lately sent him a little money.* This journey, however, did not take place, as the prince, on the first of July, departed on a visit to the imperial court.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

The regret which Tasso felt at this temporary loss of his protector, was swallowed up in the joy of having obtained permission to visit his relations at Bergamo. Previous to his leaving Mantua, he was invited to read the ethics and poetics of Aristotle, in the academy of Genoa, with a promise of four hundred crowns of gold, as fixed salary, with, perhaps, as much in fees and perquisites. To the gentleman who announced this invitation, he returned a

Is invited to lecture at Genoa.

* IX. 107, 304, 513. Serassi says that the duchess sent him a silver cup, "che giunta non so come in mano dello stampatore Baldini, avea dovuto stentar molto per poternela riavere," p. 396. This mistake is of very little consequence; but whoever will accurately examine our poet's correspondence, shall find that it was a cup, which Vittorio Baldini himself had promised Tasso, in consequence, probably, of having printed his answer to the letter of Bastiano de Rossi. *Opere*, vol. IX. 510, 511. Our poet always distinguishes Baldini by the epithet L'asino di Vittorio.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

polite and elegant letter, accepting the office, which to him would have been easy, having studied these subjects very profoundly.* He had great hopes of regaining his health at Bergamo, from which place the cavalier Tasso sent his chariot to bring our poet from Mantua. With the chariot was his friend Licino, who took this method of regaining favour, having lately offended him greatly by publishing, without asking his consent, his three *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*, with the letters written on the subject of the *Jerusalem*.† At Bergamo, Tasso was received with the highest demonstrations of esteem and admiration. His friends were anxious to see him, after acquiring such glory, and suffering so many hardships; nor is there, perhaps, a satisfaction more exquisite, than returning to ones native district, to meet applause for honours fairly won. Soon after his arrival, which happened towards the end of July, our poet was conducted to Zanga, a beautiful villa, which the family of Tasso possessed, and still possess, near the city of Bergamo. In this delicious retreat Torquato revised his tragedy, which he was soon afterward to publish, and might refresh his senses, and his imagination, amidst the gardens and the groves by which he was surrounded. Nothing can testify, however, in a more evident manner, the unhappy temperament of this unfortunate man, than that he almost immedi-

Visits Bergamo.

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* Vol. IX. p. 515, 362, 101.

† *Ibid.* p. 425, 362. Tasso this summer enlarged these three to six discourses, IX. 459, 362, and published them at Naples, in 1594.

ately became tired of his present residence, though he had panted to enjoy it with the utmost longing. "No journey, (says he, in one of his letters,) was ever desired more earnestly than this, nor was ever journey more sighed for in vain."* When the mind, however, is sick, it becomes restless, and (as in a fever,) every new posture seems better than the present one. From Zanga our bard wrote to Cardinal Albano, telling him that he enjoyed at Bergamo only the shade of an imaginary liberty, with which he neither was, nor could be, contented. "I desire, therefore," continues he, "after so many years of darkness and imprisonment, to go to Rome, where I may live in the light of men. Nor do the Appenines seem so great an impediment, or so difficult to be overcome, as the malignity of those who are envious of my quiet." He concludes with entreating the cardinal to aid and favour him, not doubting that his authority would have more effect than the persecution of his enemies.†

Tasso wishes to visit Rome.

The object of Torquato, in wishing to go to Rome, was the hope of some honourable appointment from Sixtus V., by means of the credit of some of his friends, (especially of Papio,) with that distinguished pontiff.‡ Neither Papio, nor Cardinal Albano, encouraged him in this resolution, but advised him rather to remain with the Prince of Mantua, an

* Vol. IX. p. 431.

† *Ibid.* p. 110. At p. 342, of the same volume, is a long and angry letter of Tasso to Cataneo, who had advised him not to leave Mantua.

‡ *Ibid.* 252.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

advice which, though good, was, perhaps, chiefly prompted by the desire of not being embarrassed with his protection. Among his friends, the only one (according to Serassi,) who comforted him in his design, was Scipio Gonzaga, who likewise promised to solicit the Prince of Mantua, for his permission to our poet to visit Rome.*

The melancholy of Torquato was somewhat dissipated by the annual great fair at Bergamo, during which were many of those public assemblies in which he took delight.† Meantime, a letter arrived from Genoa, soliciting his departure for that city, and promising him money for the journey. This letter he sent to Sig. Vincenzo Reggio, chancellor of the Duke of Mantua, entreating him to lay it before the prince, that he might have liberty to accept the invitation. Whether this was done I know not, for Duke William died on the twenty-fourth of August, and was succeeded by his son Vincenzo, the patron of our poet. This event made him resolve

Returns to Mantua.

* This is asserted very strongly by Serassi, p. 401, but is contradicted by our poet himself, who, in a letter to Papio, written in his way to Rome, says, in speaking of Gonzaga, "benchè egli colla sua autorità non abbia voluto aver parte nella mia licenza, o nella salute, o nel rimuovere alcuno di tanti impedimenti, che Io ho trovati per questo viaggio." Vol. X. p. 62.

† In a letter to Mr West, dated Florence, April 21, 1741, Mr Gray gives the following account of an Italian fair: "Our route is settled as follows: first, to Bologna, for a few days, to hear the Viscontina sing: next to Reggio, where there is a fair. Now, you must know, a fair here is not a place where one eats gingerbread, or rides upon hobby-horses; here are no musical clocks, nor tall Leicestershire women; one has nothing but masquing, gaming, and singing." The fair at Bergamo is one of the most splendid in Italy.

to hasten to Mantua, and accordingly he left Bergamo for that purpose on the twenty-ninth of August, 1587.*

Previous to his departure, Torquato committed to Licino, his tragedy of *Torrismondo*, for the purpose of publication. This took place a short while afterwards, and it was dedicated to the young Duke of Mantua, in a very elegant, and, as its author observed, in an appropriate manner. For as tragedy, says he, is the gravest of compositions, it could not be more suitably inscribed than to a prince, who, in the flower of youth, has shown such a singular prudence and gravity of manners, as could scarcely be expected from one ripe in years, and practised in governing. As (according to Aristotle,) it is the most perfect species of poem, to whom could this work be more justly dedicated than to a prince of such perfection; who had added new lustre to the glory of his ancestors, by his skill in poetry and eminence in arms. "In one thing only (our bard proceeds to observe,) it may be thought, that, in dedicating to a most happy prince a most melancholy composition, I have had little regard to the prosperity of your fortune. But the actions of the wretched may serve to those who are blessed as a subject of instruction; and your highness, in reading or hearing this fable, will find some things to imitate, some things to shun, some to praise, others to reprove, some to cheer, and some to sadden. And, by help of your severe judgment, it may

Publication of the Torrismondo.

* Vol. IX. p. 515.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

so purge the soul, so temper the passions, that the grief of others may produce delight; their imprudence foresight; and their misfortunes prosperity."*

The fame of Torquato was so great, and the curiosity of the public so strong, that, in the course of five months, no less than eleven editions of *Torrismondo* were published in different cities of Italy. Upon the whole, however, though this be an estimable production, it cannot be considered as an excellent tragedy. It was executed with too strict an adherence to the ancients, among whom, (to say nothing of their chorus,) comedy was generally a tissue of romantic incidents produced by chance, and tragedy a series of horrors destined by blind fatality. The *Torrismondo*, too, was written at a period, when all the etherial sense of its author, all his celestial fire was blunted and extinguished. From the specimen, however, which remains, written in his better times; from the vast superfluity of description with which it abounds, I am of opinion that our poet was not fitted to excel in tragedy, whether this was owing to nature, or to his long continued habit of heroic composition. In order to excel in epic writing, the poet must be enamoured of external scenery; he must store his fancy with all that is beautiful and all that is sublime in nature.... With such imagery the studies of the tragic writer have comparatively little relation. In his *Henriade*, the descriptions of Voltaire (whose

Different qualities requisite in a tragic and epic writer.

* Vol. V. p. 109.

tragedies are so excellent,) are general and indistinct; and, on the other hand, Torrismondo, is exhibited as giving a minute and splendid description of a storm, at a time when he is represented as overwhelmed by a sense of his misery.

To excel in tragic or in epic poetry, supposes a capability in its writer of inventing situations; of withdrawing the mind from the objects which press upon the senses; and of assuming, at will, the different passions and affections which such an invented situation would, if real, excite. But this capacity of feeling, as it were, with the heart, and speaking with the tongue of another; this complete identification with an imaginary being, is to a much greater extent necessary to the dramatic writer. It will not be sufficient for him to express natural sentiments; he must pourtray the manners and characters of mankind; he must paint a portrait, and not merely the human countenance. "Milton (says Johnson,) would not have excelled in dramatic writing; he knew human nature only in the gross, and had never studied the shades of character, and the combinations of concurring, or the perplexity of discording passions. He had read much, and knew what books could teach, but had mingled little in the world; and was deficient in the knowledge which experience must confer." The same, perhaps, may be said of Virgil, whom none ever excelled in the eloquence of the heart, or in the expression of natural sentiment; but he seems to have been incapable of character-painting, and the tragedy which he is said to have written, was, without doubt, a fine poem, but it is scarcely less doubtful, that it was a

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

bad dramatic composition. The illustrious Metastasio, talking of this assumption of ideal character, says, that "the neglect of it by the great Torquato has rendered him, in his *Torrismondo*, as inferior to himself, as in his immortal *Godfrey* he is superior to every other."

Summary of the Torrismondo.

The fable of this tragedy, which does not seem to have any historical foundation, is sufficiently romantic. Torrismondo, King of the Goths, having spent some of his youthful years as a knight errant, had met with Germondo, the young King of Sweden, who was finishing his education in a similar manner. They had travelled long together, and shared the same perils, and pleasures; the consequence of which was a mutual and ardent friendship. Previous to this acquaintance, Germondo had been present *incognito*, at a famous tournament in Norway, where he had carried off the prize from innumerable competitors, and had become violently enamoured of the king's daughter Alvida. After he returned to his capital, he solicited the old King of Norway, in the warmest manner, to bestow on him the hand of his daughter. The request was rejected with indignation, as the natural surliness of the King of Norway was increased by the memory of the hostility of the two nations; the incursions and ravages of the Swedes; and the loss of his only son, whose death he attributed to Germondo. Not satisfied, therefore, with denying his daughter, he made her solemnly swear that she would remain unmarried, unless her future husband promised to take up the quarrel, and avenge on the King of Sweden the wrongs of her family.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

In these awkward circumstances, Germondo fell upon a very awkward expedient. He wrote, in the most earnest manner, to his friend Torrismondo, and prevailed on him to go to Norway, and solicit, as for himself, the hand of Alvida, but to delay the marriage, under different pretexts, till he should return to his own capital. There he is to be met by Germondo, to whom he is to make over the princess. In his suit, Torrismondo was successful; Alvida became extremely attached to him; and he was bringing her away to his capital Arana, where he pretended he would marry her in presence of his mother, who had earnestly entreated him to protract (till she could be present at) the nuptials. During the voyage, Alvida was as winning as possible, and somewhat shook the fidelity of Torrismondo; but he might probably still have resisted, had it not been a dreadful storm, a description of which occupies forty-seven verses. Saved from this, and being alone with Alvida, during night, in the tent,—that lady, too, clinging to him with terror, at what she had undergone, he unfortunately at length gave way to his desires. Full of horror at his breach of faith, he arrives at his capital, and waits in dismay the coming of Germondo.

The foregoing circumstances we learn from Torrismondo, who narrates them to a faithful counsellor; and, as he is both enamoured of Alvida, and unwilling to bestow her, violated as she is, upon his friend, he considers with this sage how he is to act. It is agreed upon to offer to the King of Sweden, Rosmonda, the sister of Torrismondo, provided (as she is obstinately determined to be a nun,) she can be brought

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Æt. 43.

to marry, and that Germondo, on the other hand, is willing to accept of her. The first act here ends with a chorus, the composition of which (as we have seen,) cost its author a great deal of labour.

A messenger, at the beginning of the second act, announces the coming of Germondo, and a great part of the act is occupied in the persuasions of the queen-mother, who endeavours to influence her daughter, Rosmonda, to try to win the affection of the King of Sweden. This she does at the solicitations of her son, and uses, it must be confessed, some pretty powerful arguments. Torrismondo, with a minuteness which is somewhat misplaced, gives long and pompous orders about the shews which are to be exhibited on the arrival of his friend; and the act then concludes, as do all the others, with a chorus.

In the third act, Germondo arrives, and, after an amicable conference with Torrismondo, is by him introduced to Alvida. To this princess, the Swedish monarch sends, (by a chambermaid, who is a prodigious geographer,) some rich gifts, which Alvida recognizes to be those which she herself had given to the unknown champion, who was victorious at the tournament. This leads to a great many reflections; and fears are entertained by the princess, that the jealousy of Torrismondo might be excited by these presents, and by the former passion of his friend.

In the fourth act, the counsellor to whom Torrismondo had communicated his griefs, proposes, after many compliments, Rosmonda to Germondo, who, though not very wil-

ling, seems disposed at last to comply with whatever the King of the Goths should determine. Meanwhile Rosmonda informs Torrismondo that he is not her brother, but that she is the daughter of his own, and of his sister's nurse; by whom, as the child of her old age, she had been solemnly dedicated to religious services. She farther acquaints him, that it had been predicted by the wierd sisters, that the true Rosmonda would be the cause of her brother's death, and of her native kingdom passing to a different race. On this account, (as we learn from her narrative,) the young princess had been committed, by her father, to the care of enchantresses, and afterward, for greater security, sent to a different kingdom, while he imposed upon his queen the daughter of her child's nurse, as her own. Being killed suddenly in battle, the king had never revealed the secret to his spouse, nor to the world; and no one (according to the counterfeit Rosmonda,) was conscious of the circumstance, except herself, (to whom the old nurse, her mother, had disclosed it before her death,) and Frontone, an aged servant, who had carried the young princess to the distant country.

The fable now begins to blend itself with the *Œdipus Tyrannus* of Sophocles. That information may be had concerning Rosmonda, a wizard is called; who is equally mysterious, and much more pedantic than Tiresias. Torrismondo quarrels with him; and, by a process exactly similar to that in Sophocles, (the narration of Frontone, on the one hand, and of a messenger, who comes with an account of the death of the King of Norway, on the other,) it is discovered that Alvida is the true Rosmonda, and Torrismondo's sister.

CHAP. XIX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

From a narrative in act fifth, it appears that Torrismondo had endeavoured to prevail on Alvida, who was passionately fond of him, to marry Germondo. To induce her to this, he had been forced to inform her that she was his sister; but this she considered as a mere pretence for getting rid of her. Accordingly she stabbed herself; but, before her death, was joined by Torrismondo, who, after convincing her that she was his sister, and bequeathing in a letter his kingdom to Germondo, killed himself likewise. The tragedy concludes with the lamentations of the queen-mother.

Such is the fable of the tragedy of *Torrismondo*, which is sufficiently pathetic, and susceptible, it would seem, of much interest. In the hands of Tasso it excites very little; it has no character, and little nature or pathos. The descriptions are diffuse beyond all sufferance; the sentiments are strained; and bombast, united with pedantry, assumes the place of the sublime. Some passages, however, discover that the author was no common poet; as a proof of which, I shall transcribe the description given by Alvida of her sad forebodings and nocturnal inquietudes. The translation I give is that of Mr Walker, who has quoted the same passage in his *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*.

A nameless horror chills my faculties,
Whose unknown cause is far beyond the ken
Of scar'd imagination. Sorrow's hand
Blends her confusion o'er the dismal scene.
Night follows day—in vain—for present still
It harrows up my soul; before my eyes,
Or to my wakeful fancy when I doze,
Still frowns the hideous prospect. Now it seems

My faithful spouse is sever'd from my side,
And leaves me wandering thro' a boundless gloom:
And oft by day the melancholy walls,
And figur'd marbles, seem to blush with gore:
And often, from the old Imperial tombs,
Rushes the giant spectre, with a noise
As when Ægeon storm'd the walls of Heaven,
And launch'd Olympus at the wondering stars.
He frights me from my couch, and points below
A drear asylum, gloomy, and profound;
And, lest I should retreat, with menace loud
Secures the pass behind. 'It is not sleep,
But those tremendous forms that people night,
I dread.*——

——————— e temo, ahi lassa
Un non so che d' infausto, o pur d' orrendo,
Ch'a me confonde un mio pensier dolente:
Lo qual mi sveglia, e mi perturba, e m'ange
La notte, e'l giorno. Oimè, giammai non chiudo
Queste luci, già stanche, in breve sonno,
Ch'a me forme d'orrore, e di spavento
Il sogno non presenti; ed or mi sembra,
Che dal fianco mi sia rapito a forza
Il caro sposo, e senza lui solinga
Gir per via lunga, e tenebrosa, errando,
Or le mura stillar, sudare i marmi
Miro, o credo mirar di negro sangue,
Or dalle tombe antiche, ove sepolte
L'alte Regine fur di questo regno,
Uscir gran simulacro, e gran rimbombo,
Quasi d'un gran gigante, il qual rivolga
Incontra al ciel Olimpo; e Pelia, ed Ossa,
E mi scacci dal letto, e mi dimostri,
Perch'io vi fugga da sanguigna sferza,
Un' orrida spelonca, e dietro il varco
Poscia mi chiuda, onde, s'io temo il sonno,
E la quiete, anzi l'orribil guerra
De' notturni fantasmi all' aria fosca,
Sorgendo spesso ad incontrar l' Aurora,
Meraviglia non è.——

Atto I. Scena I.

CHAPTER XX.

Tasso leaves Mantua.—Visits Loretto—Arrives at Rome.—Composes verses in praise of Sixtus V.—His sanguine hopes, and final disappointment.—Writes to his sister.—Visits Naples, and takes up his residence in the Monastery of Mount Olivet.—Becomes acquainted with Manso, Marquis of Villa.—Miscellaneous circumstances.—Attends Manso to Bisaccio.—Converses with a Spirit.—Attempt to account for this phantasm.—Tasso returns to Rome.

A. D. 1587 — 1588.
AET. 43 — 44.

CHAP. XX.
A. D. 1587.
Aet. 43.

On the arrival of Tasso at Mantua, he found the duke engaged to such a degree with state affairs, that he was in a great measure overlooked; a circumstance which confirmed his resolution of leaving that city. The delicacy of his health made him decline at present the invitation to Genoa, to lecture on Aristotle; and he wished, in the first place, to

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

visit Rome, and (should he there fail of recovering his health,) Naples, and Sorrento.* Accordingly he petitioned the duke to allow him to depart, who, though he did not give him a direct refusal, rendered the execution of his journey difficult, by not assisting him with any money.† In these circumstances, he was supplied by some of his friends, and departed for Rome, on the nineteenth of October, 1587, carrying with him a portmanteau with cloathes, and a trunk with books, and some of his writings.

Tasso leaves Mantua.

The person whose encouragement to leave Mantua Tasso had been principally anxious to obtain was Scipio Gonzaga, who earnestly counselled him to remain; and, as a prevailing argument, seems to have hinted, that he himself might be injured by the poet's departure.‡ "I fear the ruin of your lordship (It is thus Tasso wrote him on the first of October, 1587,) more than my own, because yours, like a

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 337, 383.

† The following is a specimen of Tasso's mode of reasoning on this occasion, and indeed it is that of Rousseau, and of all those enthusiasts who reflect more than they observe, and to whom the most trivial word, gesture, or incident, supplies matter of profound speculation. "Io (says he, in a letter,) ho licenza di partire, ma non comandamento, nè danari; tanta e la cortesia di questo sereniss. Principe, che conoscendomi inutile al suo servizio non mi vuol ritener con mia mala soddisfazione, nè mi constringe al partire, nè mi dona cosa alcuna, che possa servire al viaggio, acciochè Io non prendessi il dono in cambio di licenza." Vol. IX. p. 503.

‡ I cannot discover how Serassi could have erred so far as to assert as follows, after mentioning that Tasso's friends were in general unwilling that he should leave Mantua and go to Rome: "Solo Monsignor Gonzaga, che veramente amava il Tasso, anteponendo ogni privato incommodo alla soddisfazion dell' amico, lodò cotesta sua risoluzione, e s'impegnò ancora d'ottenergliene il permesso dal Principe." P. 401.

CHAP. XX.
A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

mighty machine, might overwhelm me also, if I were near, and give me death and a sepulchre at once. My fall, on the other hand, cannot, in any way, overwhelm, nor even shake, your most noble house, of which the foundations are so deep and stable. I may say rather, it *has* not been able to do this, since I am already fallen and ruined; and it is now many years that I have in vain tried to rise in the opinion of men, and to restore myself by the favour of princes. Hence, my departure from Mantua cannot be the cause of any new ruin to myself, nor of any injury to your lordship, and I cannot consent that you should entertain any longer such a suspicion or anxiety. But were I to remain in Mantua contrary to my inclination, I should be oppressed, as I have already been; since this most serene prince does not deign to stretch towards me the hand of his favour, and to raise me from so many miseries. I shall go then, if possible, to Rome in any way,—in the habit of a pilgrim, or of a merchant, on horseback, on foot, or in a bark. Indeed, if M. George [Alario] does not aid me, I fear that it will be necessary for me to navigate, nor could I do a thing which I would consider as so unpleasant. I am in very bad health, and so melancholic, that I am accounted mad by others and by myself; since, not being able to conceal so many vexing thoughts, so many disquietudes of an infirm and perturbed mind, I break forth into very long soliloquies, which, if they are overheard by any one, (and they may be heard by many,) my designs are known to a number of people, and what I hope, and what I desire. The true medicine of the mind is philosophy, and

it is a remedy which I often apply to its infirmities. Hence, I begin to laugh at my misfortunes, and at all the disfavours which I receive; what more? I laugh also at the bad opinion which men have of me, and at my past folly, by which I confirmed it. This laughter, however, is so allied to fury, that I have need of hellebore, or of some such medicine, which may heal my body, full of vicious humours, and may purge my stomach, from which certain vapours ascend to the brain, that disturb my discourse and reason. In sum, having no hope of recovery at Mantua, I deliberate to go to Rome, and I commend myself to M. George, who may expedite this business as he has promised to do. Of other things I shall speak to your lordship when present; but I reckon all hopes and all promises vain, except I recover my health. Meanwhile, I commend myself to your lordship in the warmest manner in my power." *

The first steps of our poet, when leaving Mantua, were directed to the monastery of St Benedict, where he confessed, communicated, and remained a few days kindly entertained by the monks and abbot. On the evening of the twenty-fifth of October, he arrived at Bologna, where he was kindly welcomed by his friend Constantini. The cavalier John Galeazzo Rossi, hearing of his arrival, wished him by all means to reside in his palace, which he longed to dignify by so renowned a guest. Tasso would not consent

Passes through Bologna,

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 65.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

to this, but agreed to be present at a great feast given next day in honour of him by that gentleman. Many persons of both sexes who admired him were present, and treated him with infinite respect. The cavalier, and the abbot Pasterini wished to bestow on him some valuable gifts, an offer which our poet absolutely refused; he took shelter, as it were, from their importunity on this head in the house of Constantini, on whom, as the presents were sent after him, he seems to have insisted on conferring them.*

Serassi here pays a high compliment to Torquato, on that elevation of soul which led him, notwithstanding his poverty, to refuse these gifts. His mind, indeed, seems to have been partially exalted by the honours which he met with; nor was it easy, after having been almost worshipped during the day, to descend in the evening to receive relief. It cannot, however, be concealed, that, though no one seems to have had naturally a more dignified and independent spirit than our bard, yet, partly from negligence, partly from his unfortunate condition, he often descended to ungraceful solicitation. On the twenty-seventh of October, he departed to Loretto, for the purpose of absolving a vow, † and arrived on the last day of the same month. We are now to see an example of that inconsistency to which want leads a person, who considers independence as consisting in poverty, and occasionally sturdy refusals; instead of securing that first of blessings by prudence, and an honest attention to in-

Visits Loretto.

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* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 62, 54, 55.

† *Ibid.* vol. IX. pp. 251, 411.

terest. On the evening of his arrival at Loretto, Torquato wrote the following billet to his benefactor Don Ferrante Gonzaga, who fortunately happened to be there at this period: "I have just arrived at Loretto, extremely fatigued, and hearing of your excellency being here, I nourish the hope that God will aid me, being still in the condition which your excellency knows, and without any money to finish my journey. I supplicate, therefore, your excellency to bestow on me ten scudi, I mean in the way of alms, in order that I may not only have occasion to praise you always, but to pray to God for your safety and prosperity." * Soon afterward, the governor of the town, hearing of our poet's arrival, went to compliment him, and afforded him every assistance in his visit to the holy sanctuary. Torquato, whose mind was extremely devotional, visited the shrine with ardour and compunction; received the holy sacrament; lamented his errors; and formed pious resolutions. In a very dignified canzone, which he addressed to the Blessed Virgin some time afterward, he renewed the memory of the sentiments this sanctuary had inspired, and promised that only sacred subjects should thenceforward occupy his muse. †

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

His heart being lightened by the performance of his vow, Tasso departed for Rome, where, it appears from one of his

* Tiraboschi *Storia*, &c. vol. III. p. 240. Ed. Mathias.

† *Opere*, vol. VI. p. 359. *Ecco fra le tempeste*, &c. X. p. 56.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

letters, he was on the fourth of November. * He dismounted at the palace of the Patriarch Gonzaga, who received him with kindness; and many courteous compliments were paid him by different dignified personages. Tasso was accordingly in high spirits, and formed very sanguine expectations. This, I have remarked, was common on his first arrival any where, and he seems to have continued in the delusion till the close of his life, in opposition to all the dictates of experience. "I have found, (writes he to a friend soon after his arrival,) I have found Rome lovely and courteous as I had pictured her; and nothing has happened contrary to my expectation. May it please our lord [the pope] to confer on me some favour; and though this is almost beyond my own expectation, and the belief of others, yet, through the mercy of God, I do not despair of it. Meanwhile, I am consoled by the goodness which I every day experience from many illustrious persons; and I am of opinion, that this must be my residence, how long I know not, but at least it must be my residence." † In a letter too, to Licino, he remarks, that he had never acted more reasonably than in forming the plan of coming to Rome, and that consequently it was no wonder, that it had succeeded so well. ‡ It is difficult to abstain from smiling, (though pity is the proper sentiment on the occasion,) when one reads the following passage of an epistle, written on the twenty-

Arrives at Rome.

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 61. † *Ibid.* ‡ Vol. IX p. 272.

second of November; that is eighteen days after the letter which I have lately quoted, and less than three weeks after our poet's arrival at Rome: "I am in Rome, where, to my incredible displeasure, I see the destruction of all the hopes I had conceived. I am afflicted, or rather in despair; especially as I see the necessity of again becoming a courtier, of which I abhor even the name, to say nothing of the employment. But rather than that, I will retire into some wilderness; so much I am tired of courts, and of the world." *

Sixtus V. was at this time the sovereign pontiff, a man who, from the most degraded situation, had attained this high dignity, by a long and consummate practice of hypocrisy. Neither the meanness of his birth, however; the gloom of a Franciscan cloyster; the advance of old age; nor the long habit of assentation, had subdued his genius, nor cramped the energies of his soul. In the short space of five years, (1585—1590,) he established a military and naval force, abolished the sanctuaries at Rome, and exterminated the banditti who infested his territories. Not only this, but he restored and endeavoured to rival the monuments of antiquity; and, had his reign been protracted, he would perhaps have shewn himself capable of renovating Italy. † This

Sixtus V.

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* *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 317.

† Voltaire, in his *Henriade*, characterises Sixtus in the following manner, after speaking of Philip II. of Spain:

Sixte au trône élevé du sein de la poussière,
Avec moins de puissance, a l'ame encore plus fière;

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

prince, however, was neither an admirer, nor did he approve himself to be a patron of poetry. Tasso, nevertheless, flattered himself, that he would obtain some appointment; and he was desirous that his friend Papio, who was a favourite of Sixtus, should introduce him to his Holiness, that he might represent his situation. Whether Papio was afraid that he would harass the pontiff by a long catalogue of woes; whether, as Sixtus was of a severe and unrelenting temper, he dared not use the liberty requested by the poet, he still deferred the audience, under various pretences. With this prudence, or indifference, of Papio, Tasso was much affected; * and what added to his vexation at this time was, that Alphonso of Este seems to have complained to the Duke of Mantua, that this prince had allowed him to leave that city. In a letter of our poet to Licino, of the second of De-

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Le pastre de Montalte est le rival des Rois,
Dans Paris, comme à Rome, il veut donner des loix—
Violent, mais adroit, dissimulé, trompeur,
Ennemi des puissans, des faibles oppresseur—
Il devait sa grandeur à quinze ans d'artifices,
Il sut cacher quinze ans ses vertus, et ses vices.
Il sembla fuir le rang, qu'il brulait d'obtenir,
Et s'en fit croire indigne, afin d'y parvenir.
Chant. 3me. et 4me.

In every country there is some celebrated personage of former times, whose name is in a peculiar degree familiar among the vulgar. Sixtus V. enjoys this privilege in Italy; every shepherd, while speaking of him, thinks his son may be pope, and every monk that he may be pope himself.

* *Opere*, vol. IX. pp. 298, 300.

cember, 1587, is the following passage: "Behold once more I am tormented by the Duke of Mantua, or rather (as I imagine) by others, who, without his knowledge, avail themselves of his name. If that duke has given me my liberty, he should be satisfied with my enjoying it at Rome, in Naples, or wherever I can; for as, in Rome, I am without money, and, therefore, cannot live as becomes my condition, I must endeavour to reside at Naples, and recover my mother's dowry. There lives not a poorer gentleman than me, nor one more unhappy, and more undeserving of this fortune. Therefore, they ought now to be quiet, and not hinder my efforts to live as becomes my birth; unless, indeed, they wish to kill me, or to compel me to suicide."* He then entreats Licino that he would prevail on the city of Bergamo to solicit the two dukes to give him no farther disturbance. Such was the violence of our poet's feelings at this period, that, on the very same day, he wrote another letter to Licino, repeating the contents of his former one, and beseeching his interest, and that of the city of his ancestors. He also, on the twentieth of December, addressed a petition to Sixtus V., of which the following is a translation:

Disquiets of Tasso at Rome.

"Torquato Tasso, the most humble and devoted servant of your Holiness, has recourse to your clemency, after many years of sickness and imprisonment, after many injuries received, and many dangers hazarded, in different parts of

* Serassi, p. 412.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1587. Aet. 43.

Italy. Most humbly he supplicates your Beatitude, that he may be permitted to continue in Rome, without suspicion of private violence, or injustice. For, as he was born in the kingdom of Naples, to which (in addition to love of country) many necessities constrain him to return, he recognises, and will always recognise, your Holiness as his only sovereign lord; to whose judgment he appeals from that of all others, by whom he has been sooner condemned than heard." *

It is not improbable, as is conjectured by Serassi, that the whole of this disturbance about the Duke of Mantua, was a plot of George Alario, Gonzaga's steward, who was probably tired of attention to a person so infirm, so melancholy, restless, and unsocial. Of the impertinence of this person our poet often complains, and with the utmost justice, as we shall find in the sequel.† His arrogance was, no doubt, increased by the elevation of his master, who, in the promotion of cardinals, made by Sixtus on the eighteenth of December, 1587, was one of the number. This circumstance gave Tasso much satisfaction, and he wrote a very respectable canzone on the occasion.‡ The mind of

Scipio Gonzaga is created a Cardinal.

* Vol. X. p. 66. Serassi, while he misrepresents the occasion on which Tasso wrote this petition, only alludes to it, without giving it a place in his biography. The obvious reason of this is, that our poet here recognises Naples as his country, a doctrine which his biographer most vehemently opposes.

† Among the epistles of Tasso, are two (vol. IX. 283.) addressed to this personage from St Annes. Their superscription is, Al molto Magnifico Signore Giorgio Alario, and their address, Molto Magnifico Signore, come Fratello. This was the mode in which cardinals wrote to great personages. In a letter to Constantini, dated Rome, 16th March, 1588, our poet says, M. Giorgio Alario, si fa ragione a sua voglia, e dà sentenze irrevocabili sovra i miei particolari, delle quali non mi posso appellare, se non al Papa. IX. 518.

‡ Vol. VI. p. 295. *Non è nuovo*, &c.

CHAP. XX.

A D. 1588. Aet. 44.

Scipio Gonzaga, however, had been considerably alienated from his unhappy friend,* as were also Cardinal Albano, and Cataneo, his secretary, in opposition to whose advice our poet had gone to Rome. His principal satisfaction at this period arose from a visit of his dearest friend Constantini to that city; and at his suggestion he wrote, in January, 1588, a poem, consisting of fifty octaves, on the virtues and great actions of Sixtus. In addition to these, he composed other ten stanzas, entitled *L'Acque Felici*, or *The Happy Waters*, in commendation of the aqueducts formed by that pontiff: He wrote also two complimentary canzoni, and was avaricious neither of poetry, nor of praise.† Tasso, however, instead of the abbey which he expected,‡ received only assurances of provision; and (weary at last of delusive promises) he, like other sick people, endeavoured to find rest by a change of posture. He determined, therefore, to visit Naples, expecting either to obtain, from justice, the dowry of his mother, or, from favour, the property of his father, which had been confiscated, as we have seen, when Bernardo followed the fortunes of the Prince of Salerno.‖

Tasso wishes to visit Naples and Sorrento.

Of his intention to visit Naples and Sorrento, Tasso had written to inform his sister, soon after his arrival at Rome. From her he had reason to expect a kind reception, as by his interest he had placed her two sons, the eldest in the

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* Vol. IX. p. 220.

† Vol. IX. p. 525. VI. 331. *Te Sisto Io canto*, &c. p. 330. *Acque, che per cammin*, &c. p. 293. *Come poss'io*, p. 361. *Mira devotamente*, &c.

‡ Vol. IX. pp. 120, 524. X. p. 48. ‖ *Life*, &c. vol. I. p. 23.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

service of the Prince of Mantua, and the youngest with one of the Princes of Parma.* It appears, however, either that there had been some misunderstanding between our poet and Cornelia, or that he was suspicious of the interference of officious persons; and the letters, of which the one is dated November 14, 1587, and the other six days afterwards, are exceedingly pathetic. He tells her that his body is infirm, his mind weakened, his memory destroyed, his friends indifferent, and fortune cruel. "I know not," continues he, "if, amidst so many causes of despair, I may hope that you are alive; in order that you may receive me once more in the habit of a shepherd, since in any other I cannot easily go to see you. I pray you to have regard more to my worth than to my poverty; for, if I were well, I could find five hundred scudi of ordinary provision, not to speak of the extraordinary; but being infirm, what else (unless I am restored by your promises) what else can I think of, but of dying in the Hospital of Incurables? Signora sister, my distemper is truly incurable; confirmed by habit, aggravated by age, and by the deceit of men, who have not wished to cure, but to bewitch me; so that, even should you observe your promises, my hopes of health are far from san-

* Serassi, p. 369, *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 182, 384. It seems, notwithstanding, more than probable, from a letter, dated 6th October, 1586, that some coolness had taken place between Tasso and his sister; for, writing to one Father Tasso, our poet says "E s'a questa buon' opera aggiungerete quella di pacificarmi con mia Sorella, avrete fatto tutto ciò, che convenga ad amico, a parente, a religioso, a predicatore." *Opere*, vol. IX. 433; and in a letter, 14th November, 1587, he desires a friend to inform him of the state of his sister. Della quale (adds he) molt' anni non ho avviso. IX. p. 392.

guine. I speak of this incurable distemper, for as to some of the others, they might easily be remedied. I beseech you, by the memory and soul of that father who begot, and of that mother who gave us birth, I beseech you to live, that I may come, I will not say to enjoy, but to respire beneath that heaven under which I was born; to console myself with the view of the sea, and of the gardens; to unbosom myself to your affection; and to drink of those wines, or waters, which might serve to alleviate my infirmities. Advise me also, if there be a hope of recovering that portion of our inheritance concerning which you wrote me, since, unless this be the case, I know not how to live, and with this every evil would seem light. And much should I consider myself indebted to the compassionate mercy of God, if he has decreed that my death should happen rather in your arms, than in those of the servants of an hospital." * Never, however, had Tasso an opportunity of again embracing his sister; as, from a most affecting letter, written by him from Naples to a friar at Sorrento, it appears that she rested, before her brother, from the afflictions of this miserable life. †

Serassi is altogether silent of these letters of Tasso to, and concerning, his sister; and the reason is, that our poet speaks in them, as if discontented with his relations at Bergamo, and professes his preference of Naples to Lombardy. In return, however, he furnishes minute, and, upon the whole,

* Vol. IX. p. 139; see too X. 319. † Vol. X. 322.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

pretty accurate, information about his baggage. Prior to his departure to Naples, and indeed repeatedly from his coming to Rome, Tasso wrote to different persons in Mantua, entreating them to send him two chests of books, which he had left in that city.* As these had not arrived, though he had been now several months at Rome, he began to imagine that they were kept by the duke, as a pledge of his return. It cost him no little trouble, also, to recover the portmanteau with clothes, and a trunk with books, which, I have mentioned, he carried with him at his departure from Mantua.† These he had left behind him at Modena, and the consequence was, that, during the six winter months, he was in the greatest want of clothes; and when the trunk (which probably he had not taken the trouble to lock) arrived, several of the books were stolen.‡ Those of an indolent tem-

* Vol. IX. p. 272. Le mie robe, oltre i libri son poche, e di poco momento, nè so se bastino a pagare i debiti, e la condotta, volendo il servitore esser pagato; ma i libri stimo quanto la vita. N'ho due casse piene: nella terza ve ne sono alcuni pochi, de' quali si potrebbe fare un fardello, e porlo per sovra soma, ma avendone Io bisogno grandissimo, vorrei, che fossero mandati innanzi Natale in tutti i modi, (see too pp. 317, 522.) With regard to this servant, Tasso says, in another letter, p. 518, Al servitore, che mi seguì mal mio grado, Io non son debitore, se non del salario di un mese, ch'era uno scudo, anzi di nulla; perchè il primo giorno gli dissi, che io non voleva, che mi servisse, perchè non poteva pagarlo: ed egli volle fermarsi a mio dispetto nella camera, dove Io alloggiava, sinchè mi fece venire quella febbre, che mi spaventò di morte. Se vuol esser pagato di questo ministero, dico, ch'è ben dritto: ed in quella parte, che appartiene alla sua diligenza, sappiate, che aveva gran pensiero, che io vivessi sobrio, prima che Io mi ammalassi; ma dapoichè Io cominciai a giacere, mi confortava a ristorarmi. Tasso seems to have had no anxiety to plume himself on the speedy payment of his debts. *Ibid.* p. 531.

† Page 213.

‡ Vol. IX. p. 517.

per may suppose the innumerable vexations which a person often changing place, and with a considerable quantity of baggage, must frequently have felt, in his struggles between the horrour of packing it, and the despair at losing it. Tasso departed for Naples in the end of March, 1588, leaving directions to his friend Cataneo to take charge of his library, when it should arrive at Rome.*

Tasso departs to Naples.

At Naples our poet was received with testimonies of high esteem, and was invited by the Count of Paleno, son of the grand admiral of the kingdom, to take up his residence in his palace.† Tasso, however, chose rather to abide with the monks of Mount Olivet, whose monastery was in one of the most beautiful situations in that country of enchanting landscape. The gardens were now studded with the flowers of spring; the almond had already unfolded its tender blossoms; and the same breeze wafted the song of the nightingale, and the odours of the orange grove. From an arbour of citron, or a bower of myrtle, Tasso, intoxicated with perfume, might behold at a distance the majestic Vesuvius; the reposing tranquillity of the bay of Naples; or the undulating beauty of its waves. In the evening, the air would be still more balmy, the fragrance still more powerful, the melody more lavish, and the scenes more sweet. At times the shadowy landscape would be softly tinted by the magic

* Vol. IX. p. 519.

† Vol. X. p. 319.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

light of the moon; her image would be reflected in the ample bay; and a long line of trembling radiance would glitter along the deep. Nor, in these Elysian regions, does night appear with the sad and sombre aspect which it assumes in our northern climates. Gay and lively groups dance beneath the promontories; while from the gliding boats, a music is heard, which, prolonged and mellowed by the cliffs, and by the distance, has a sweetness almost spiritual.

Such are the capacities of Naples, during the spring, of inspiring "vernal delight and joy;" nor, even on the distempered feelings of Tasso, could they altogether resign their influence. The repose, too, of the monastery, interrupted only by religious ceremonies; the solemn anthem and the soft response, would all contribute to tranquillise his thoughts. In the monastery our poet was visited by different personages. Of these the most distinguished afterwards by fame was John Battista Manso, Marquis of Villa, a man who, by a singular felicity, has been the friend, and patron of the two most distinguished modern poets. His name has been inscribed not only on the eternal page of Tasso, but in the equally durable lines of Milton. Manso was also the friend of Marino, who only wanted justness of taste, to have rendered him almost equal to these more illustrious bards.

Manso.

> Oh happy Sire! where'er Torquato's name
> Shall wing its flight, and gather all its fame;
> "Where'er extends Marino's mild renown,
> Thy name, and worth, and honours, shall be known:"
> Thou too shalt share their triumph, thou shalt fly
> Exulting at their side, and never die;

While every age shall say—The god of song
Dwell'd, with his minstrel maids, his train among.*

Of the kindness of this young nobleman to Tasso, and almost of his idolatry, we have many proofs. There exist several letters of that poet, thanking him for presents, and he thus speaks of his attentions in one of these epistles: "To that courtesy and condescension which your lordship personally shews me, and which you testify in all your letters and messages, I cannot answer suitably, except by silence and humility; if silence may in any respect be considered as an answer. But as you might not remain contented with this conduct, I wish to satisfy you, having more regard to your favour than to what may perhaps be considered as the rules of propriety. I cannot imagine eloquence which would equal your courtesy, nor ornament of words which can paint your modesty."† A heart which has suffered much, easily warms with the beams of kindness; and, when one has met with persecution, even mere forbearance seems to confer an obligation. The benevolence of Manso, however, needed no foil to set off its lustre; and never did benevo-

* Fortunate Senex! ergo quacunque per orbem
Torquati decus, et nomen celebrabitur ingens,
Claraque perpetui succrescet fama Marini,
Tu quoque in ora frequens venies, plausumque virorum,
Et parili carpes iter immortale volatu!
Dicetur tum sponte tuos habitasse penates
Cynthius, et famulas venisse ad limina Musas.

Milton, *Mansus*, v. 50.

† Vol. X. p. 325.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588, Aet. 44.

lence meet with so rich a reward. Not only did Tasso himself sing the praises of his friend, but Milton, in all the glow of unsubdued genius, celebrates, with the most melting sensibility, his attentions to his poetical father. The conclusion of the admirable epistle of the English bard to Manso is so exceedingly tender; it is translated by Cowper with so much beauty, that I am happy that the occasion justifies my introducing it as an ornament to my pages:

Well may we think, Oh dear to all above!
Thy birth distinguish'd by the smile of Jove;
And that Apollo shed his kindliest power,
And Maia's son, on that propitious hour;
Since only minds so born can comprehend
A poet's worth, or yield that worth a friend:
Hence on thy yet unfaded cheek, appears
The lingering freshness of thy greener years;
Hence in thy front, and features, we admire
Nature unwither'd, and a mind entire.
Oh might so true a friend to me belong!
So skill'd to grace the votaries of song,
Should I recal hereafter into rhyme
The kings and heroes of my native clime;
Arthur the chief, who even now prepares,
In subterraneous being, future wars;
With all his martial knights, to be restor'd,
Each to his seat, around the federal board;
And O, if spirit fail me not, disperse
Our Saxon plunderers in triumphant verse;
Then after all, when with the past content,
A life I finish, not in silence spent;
Should he kind mourner o'er my death-bed bend,
I shall but need to say, "Be still my friend!"
He, faithful to my dust, with kind concern,
Shall place it gently in a modest urn;
He, too, perhaps shall bid the marble breathe
To honour me, and with the graceful wreath

Or of Parnassus, or the Paphian Isle,
Shall bind my brows—but I shall rest the while.
Then also, if the fruits of faith endure,
And virtue's promis'd recompense be sure;
Borne to those seats, to which the blest aspire
By purity of soul, and virtuous fire;
These rites, as fate permits, I shall survey
With eyes illumin'd by celestial day;
And, every cloud from my pure spirit driven,
Joy in the bright beatitude of Heaven.*

* This translation of Cowper is taken from Mr Hayley's very excellent *Life of Milton*, and is introduced by that very able and amiable writer, in the following manner: "Pleasing, and honourable as the civilities were, that our young countryman [Milton,] received from this Nestor of Italy, [Manso,] he has amply repaid them, in a poem, which, to the honour of English gratitude and English genius, we may justly pronounce superior to the compliments bestowed on this engaging character, by the two celebrated poets, who wrote in his own language; and were peculiarly attached to him."

"Of the five sonnets, indeed, that Tasso addressed to his courteous and liberal friend, two are very beautiful; but even these are surpassed, both in energy and tenderness, by the following conclusion of a poem inscribed to Manso by Milton."

It certainly is not my intention to enter into any dispute with my friend on the relative merit of the compositions of two poets whom we equally revere; but I must observe, in justice to Tasso, that the poem of Milton was composed in his thirty-first year, in all the bloom and vigour of his genius; those of his rival in sickness, languor, and decay. "Perhaps, (says he, in the letter to Manso, of which I have already quoted a part,) perhaps you have intended to signify to me my tardiness in replying to your sonnet, and I would apologize, did I not wish already to enjoy the privileges of friendship, as if it were ancient and confirmed. I send you *fourteen verses*, the only fruit which I have hitherto been able to reap from my sterile or exhausted mind; and I beseech you not to repent of the choice you have made, though I cannot, by my compositions, correspond to the number of your merits." X. p. 325.

From this letter, we perceive that Manso was a poet; and, indeed, he published a volume of *Rime*, with the following title, *Poesie Nomiche di Giambatista Manso, Marchese di Villa, Signore della Città di Bisaccia e di Pianca, Accademico Ozioso, divise in Rime Amorose, Sacre, e Morali. In Venezia appresso Francesco Bada, 1635, in 12.* But the poetical composition of Manso, that has the best chance of immortality, is his distich on Milton, which, though it cannot be cited as a model of harmony, nor is very remarkable

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

The first employment of Tasso at Naples, as it had been his principal inducement for going thither, was to arrange matters for his process. He consulted on this subject different sages of the law, all of whom, as we learn from our poet's correspondence, gave him the most flattering hopes. "They all inform me, (says he, in a letter to Constantini,) that I shall most assuredly recover the dowry of my mother, and not only that, but my father's property."* And in a letter to Peter Grassi, he says, in speaking of his lawsuit, "All the advocates promise me, that I shall gain it unquestionably."† He claimed three thousand five hundred ducats of dowry, and the confiscated property of Bernardo, which would have amounted to several thousand crowns. One great hardship was, that he did not know against whom to bring his action; and this was accompanied by one not

Tasso's lawsuit.

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either for the originality or excellence of the conceit, is sufficiently respectable for an old man on the borders of eighty:

Ut mens, forma, decor, facies, mos, si pietas sic,
Non Anglus, verum herclè Angelus ipse fores.

The veneration of Manso for Tasso appears not only from his life of that poet, but from all his other works, as his *Paradossi*, printed Milan, 1608, by Bordoni, in 4to, his twelve dialogues, *dell' Amore, e della Bellezza*, entitled *Erocallia*, and printed in Venice, by Deuchino, 1628, in 4to. In all these, Tasso is introduced as a speaker, and his doctrines and mode of composition, are held up as models of perfection.

Manso was founder, in 1611, of the Academy of the Oziosi, which flourished till his death, an event which happened on the 28th December, 1645, in the eighty-fourth year of his age. My information concerning these works of Manso is derived from Serassi, (p. 416.) who refers his readers for further notices, to Chioccarelli, Toppi, Tafuri in the *Scrittori Napoletani*, and Gio. Vittorio de Rossi, in the Pinacoteca, III. 13.

* Vol. IX. 519. † *Ibid*, p. 394.

less severe, the want of money. "As it is an affair (says he,) now of many years, I am not certain who is in possession; and besides I have not money to litigate, which is the thing of principal importance in a lawsuit."* In these circumstances, he thought it advisable to procure, which he did, an excommunication from the Pope, against whoever consciously detained his property.† This excommunication, which was generally expedited in such desperate cases, had all the success which might be expected, published, as it was, in Italy, and addressed to such only as chose to appropriate it. The anxiety of our poet, on this account, seems to have counteracted all the good effects which might have been expected from the baths and balsamic air of Naples.‡ "I came to Naples, (says he, in a letter to Count Mazzarino, written soon after this period,) with the hope of recovering my property and health; the first of which had been promised me by my sister and a relation, the other by physicians. But without having acquired the former, I have lost somewhat of the latter; and I fear I shall lose the remainder, and even my life. But, though I have lost the courage to litigate, I have not lost that of petitioning his majesty.... I claimed three thousand five hundred ducats of my mother's dowry, and this I did not believe that

* Vol. IX. p. 520. † *Ibid*, 91, X. p. 330.

‡ I shall collect, in the Appendix, the different passages of Tasso's letters, in which he speaks of the symptoms of his disorders. Appendix (No. XXXIII.)

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

justice would deny me; at any rate, I hoped, from the equity of his majesty, that he would at least allow me the usufruct of ten years, such being the period since, sick to death, I departed from Naples. Since that time I have been neither able to litigate, nor to procure the necessary information, nor even to supplicate the favour of his majesty. By how much greater, therefore, has been my oppression, by so much more memorable ought to be the equity and liberality, or rather the justice, of so great a king.... Surely he ought not to suffer that I, deprived of my paternal and maternal property, deprived of health, deprived of the benevolence of friends, and the tenderness of relations, should die miserably in an hospital, as I have lived in one so many years."*

Changes planned in the Jerusalem.

Previous to his departure from Mantua, our poet had resolved to make some changes in his *Jerusalem*, and to add four cantos; probably from some idea of the epical symmetry of twenty-four books.† He had been distracted in that court, and in Rome, by other occupations; but in the month of June, after his arrival at Naples, he had composed about two hundred stanzas. This we learn from a letter of Camil-

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 334.

† Vol. IX. p. 338. Niuna cosa più desidero, che d'accrescer il mio poema, e di far molte mutazioni: ma a questo mio desiderio, trovo molti impedimenti; and in a letter, p. 505, dated 25th March, 1587, he says, I quattro canti, che ho deliberato d'aggiungere al mio Goffredo, non sono nè finiti, nè cominciati, ma quanto prima ci porrò mano. See too Vol. IX. p. 315.

lo Pellegrino, dated on the first of July, 1588. "The Signior Tasso is at Naples, esteemed, admired, and caressed by every one; but he wishes not to attach himself to any particular patron. He recites about two hundred stanzas, which he intends to interpose in the cantos of his *Jerusalem.*" We are informed by Manso, in his life of Tasso, that our author often consulted him with regard to the correction of his poem, and that he frequently differed in opinion from the bard. Soon afterward he interrupted this study, at the request of his hosts, the monks of Mount Olivet, who entreated him to compose a poem on the origin of their congregation. This was selling their hospitality at a pretty dear price; and the courtesy of Tasso, in complying, will not seem small to those who know what it is to be constrained to leave a work which interests all the faculties of the soul, to drudge on a subject which is totally uninteresting. "It is, (says he, in a letter to Cardinal Caraffa, to whom this poem is dedicated,) it is a kind of infelicity to reckon only benefits received, without being able to number some that have been bestowed. Hence I could not refuse to write something for the satisfaction of these fathers, who sheltered me after an infirmity of twelve years, or rather after many, and with many infirmities. I have laid aside, therefore, my works, and, though still feeble, and despairing, as it were, of health, I have begun to versify, according to the direction of those fathers, that my verses may be, as it were, an acknowledgment of their kind-

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

ness and charity."* He adds, that he had resolved that this poem should resemble his others, that is, should not be too prolix in the imitation of subjects unfit for the embellishment of figures and diction. This little work, which is entitled *Il Monte Oliveto*, consists of one book of an hundred octaves, and was left unfinished.

Though Torquato resided principally in this delightful monastery, he sometimes went abroad, especially with Manso, who, as already stated, wrote sonnets in his praise, and received poetical incense in return.† Some agreeable hours he was accustomed to spend in a house of that nobleman, built on the sea shore, which, near Naples, is enchantingly beautiful.‡ Our poet also at this time projected (and perhaps accomplished,) a visit to Sorrento.‖ His chief admirer, after Manso, was the Count of Paleno, who, at the poet's first going to Naples, had wished him to be his guest, and

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* Vol. IX. p. 118.

† Vol. VI. p. 241. *Dove i frondosi*, &c.

‡ That Tasso was greatly pleased with this littoral house of Manso, appears from the following extract of one of his letters to that nobleman, dated Rome, 18th June, 1592: Io ho grandissimo desiderio di godere il suo bellissimo luogo, ch'è sulla piaggia del mare, nè so se potrò tollerarlo sino in quest' altra state, &c.

In Mr Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, the fifth number of the Appendix is, "an Attempt to ascertain the site of the Villa near Naples, in which the Marquis Manso received Tasso and Milton, with notices of the Manso family." I am permitted by my very kind friend to enrich my Appendix with this portion of his valuable work. Appendix (No. XXXIV.)

‖ *Opere*, X. 332. Pregherò felice navigazione all' Armata (the Spanish Armada,) in qualche mia composizione, subito che Io sono giunto in Sorrento. No such composition, however, seems to be extant in Tasso's works.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

was still desirous of this honour. Torquato at last consented, and apartments were accordingly provided for him in the palace of that nobleman. This being told to the prince of Conca, father of the Count, and an old subtle politician, he either fearing, or under pretence of fearing the malevolence of the court, if he should admit as his guest the son of a rebel, rigorously forbade his son to invite him. The young man used both entreaties and arguments, and a violent discord would have ensued between them, if our bard, who had learned something of the dispute, had not declined the honour which was proposed to him. For this a pretence was at this time easy, as Manso, finding it necessary to quell some disputes in his town of Bisaccio, invited Torquato to accompany him. Here, as Serassi conjectures, he remained all October, and a part of November. His employment was such as one would not have expected,—the disports of hunting and of dancing. This we learn from Manso himself, who writes to the Count of Paleno in the following manner:

Tasso visits Bisaccio.

" The Signior Torquato is become a very mighty hunter; and triumphs over all the asperity of the season, and of the country. When the days are bad, we spend them, and the long hours of evening, in hearing music and songs; for one of his principal enjoyments is to listen to the *Improvvisatori*, whose facility of versifying he envies; nature having, as he says, been to him in this point very avaricious. Sometimes, too, we dance with the girls here, a thing which likewise affords him much pleasure; but chiefly we sit con-

Narrative of his conversation with a Spirit.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

versing by the fire, and often we have fallen into discourse of that Spirit, which, he says, appears to him. Indeed he has talked to me of it in such a way, that I know not well what to say, or what to believe; but only that I suspect that his frenzy will prove contagious. Sometimes, to cure him of this weakness, as I imagine it to be, I demonstrate to him by strict arguments, that his visions cannot be true, but rather the creations of a fancy, disturbed by melancholy fumes; and which thus makes him give reality to vain phantasms, that neither are, nor can be, real. That this cannot be a bad Spirit is evident in many ways, since it discourses to him of religious matters, and persuades him to devotion, and besides pronounces the most blessed names of Jesus and of Mary, and, as he himself affirms, speaks with reverence of the cross, and of the relics of the saints. But my principal reason is the consolation and the comfort which it leaves him when it departs, and which evil Spirits are never wont to do.* On

* That the phantasies of Tasso, though generally, were not always of a dismal hue, appears from the following extract of a letter to the patriarch Gonzaga, vol. IX. p. 420: Mi maraviglio, che sin'ora non le siano state scritte le cose che dico fra me stesso; e le soddisfazioni, e gli onori, e i favori, e i doni, e le grazie degli Imperatori, e de' Re, e de' Principi grandissimi, i quali Io mi vo fingendo, e formando e riformando a mia voglia. "I marvel that hitherto the things which I say to myself have not been recorded: and the satisfactions, the honours, the favours, the gifts, and the graces of emperors, and kings, and potent princes, which I feign, and form, and reform as pleases me."

In general, however, the phantasies of Tasso were of a melancholy kind; and, from the following passage of a letter written from Naples, to Cataneo, we learn that he was not always consoled by his benevolent spirit. Al Sig. Cardinale Scipione, [Gonzaga,] ho scritto. Egli sa quel, che farei a V. S. se non ha indurato il cuore contra me. Non posso

the other hand, I remark that it cannot be an angel; since, although he be a Christian, a virtuous, and, for many years back, even a very spiritual man, nevertheless the apparition of angels is not granted to men of usual goodness, but to the perfect, and the saints. Thus it would be arrogant to consider this Spirit as an angel, and injurious to reckon it a dæmon. Now, as there is no other kind of Spirit but angels and dæmons; and this being neither the one, nor the other, it follows that this apparition is no real Spirit, but a deceit or phantasy, such as has happened to many, and particularly to those who, like him, are weak of sight."

It must be acknowledged that this dilemma of Manso was sufficiently puzzling; but it is one great advantage of talent, that, if it does not always preserve in the right, it at least serves the purpose of justifying one when in the wrong. We are now to hear the answer of Torquato.

"To these things he replied, that the reality of these apparitions was evident from the long time he had seen them, and from the conformity which he has always observed in their resemblance, a thing which could not happen unless they had reality, and if they were only vain fictions of his fancy. This correspondence of appearance proves their

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porgere altra supplica, se non pregarla, che muti consiglio. Se non temessi d'offenderla, la pregherei a supplicare il Papa in mio nome, che scommunicasse tutti coloro, i quali o con malie o con veleni, o con altra cosa nociva cercano d'offendermi, e d'indurmi per disperazione a lasciar l'uso de' Santi Sacramenti, de' quali prego Iddio che mi conceda la grazia. Ma la Carità parla per me in questa materia. *Opere*, vol. X. p. 321.

CHAP. XX.
A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

truth; for, in phantastic visions, such as are formed by the dim-sighted, the feverish, or the intoxicated, there is no order, no agreement, no regular series. If the things (he added,) which he hears and sees were phantastic imaginations, they could not be such as to transcend his knowledge; since knowledge is formed of the mass or mixture of ideas, or species, which spring from our perceptions, and are deposited in the memory. But, in the many and long, and continued discourses which he has held with this Spirit, he has heard from it things which he had never heard nor read; nor could he find that any other man had learned them. Hence he concluded that these his visions could not be foolish fictions of his fancy, but true and real apparitions of some Spirit, who, whatever be the reason, had assumed a sensible appearance."

"To those things, (continues Manso) I replying, contradicting, and arguing, he was at length, one day, induced to say, 'since I cannot persuade you by reasoning, I shall convince you by experience; I shall cause you with your very eyes to see that Spirit, the existence of which my words cannot influence you to believe.' I accepted the proffer, and the following day, as we were sitting by ourselves together by the fire, he turned his eyes towards a window, and held them a long time so intensely fixed on it, that, when I called him, he did not answer. At last, 'Lo!' said he, 'the friendly Spirit which has courteously come to talk with me, lift up your eyes and you shall see the truth.' I turned my eyes thither immediately; but, though I endeavoured to look as

keenly as I could, I beheld nothing but the rays of the sun, which streamed through the panes of the window into the chamber. And whilst I still looked around without beholding any object, Torquato began to hold, with this unknown something, a most lofty converse. I heard, indeed, and saw nothing but himself; nevertheless his words, at one time questioning, at another replying, were such as take place between those who reason strictly on some important subject. And from what is said by the one, the replies of the other may easily be comprehended by the intellect, although they be not heard by the ear. The discourses were so lofty and marvellous, both by the sublimity of their topics, and a certain unwonted manner of talking, that, exalted above myself into a kind of ecstasy, I did not dare to interrupt them, nor ask Torquato about the Spirit, which he had announced to me, but which I did not see. In this way, while I listened between stupefaction and rapture, a considerable time had elapsed, till at last the Spirit departed, as I learned from the words of Torquato, who, turning to me, said, 'from this day forward all your doubts shall have vanished from your mind.' And I, "or rather they are increased, since, though I have heard many things worthy of marvel, I have seen nothing of what you promised to shew me to dispel my doubts." He smiled and said, 'you have seen and heard more of him than perhaps,' ... and here he paused. Fearful of importuning him by new questions, the discourse ended; and the only conclusion I can form is, what I before said, that it is more likely that his visions or

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

frenzies will disorder my own mind, than that I shall extirpate his true or imaginary opinion." *

This very uncommon incident is contained in a letter from Manso, to the Count of Paleno, written not after a long period, when the memory might have been treacherous, but immediately subsequent to the very time at which it happened. It is not impossible that a fond admiration of the writings of Plato, in which Socrates is represented as affirming that he had a familiar spirit, might have given this direction to the fancy of Tasso. He was for a long time employed in the composition of dialogues, in which he himself was sometimes the Socrates; appearing in them under the name of the *Neapolitan Stranger*, as Plato disguises his master, or himself, under that of the *Athenian Guest*. A similar spirit was said to have attended the Platonist Plotinus; and, in the days of the triumph of that fanciful philosophy, vanity, or enthusiasm, could easily attribute to themselves this distinction. With regard to Tasso, it was no wonder that, both from the injured state of his nerves, and the long over-activity which the direction of his studies had given to the faculty of fiction, it was no wonder, that illusions should frequently have become stronger than external impressions; and that he should have mistaken for realities his own diseased perceptions. In the weary solitude of the hospital, it was to be expected that a fancy naturally so vi-

Attempt to account for Tasso's Spirit.

* Manso, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 143, *et seq.*

vid, and so continually indulged, should have at length, in a superstitious age and country, become so powerful as to mistake occasionally its shapes for substances. The deceptions which are occasionally practised with persons in his situation, were attributed by him *then* to the tricks of a goblin. *Now*, the direction of his fancies was altered; he was employed at leisure in the frequent composition of Socratic dialogues, and his mischievous sprite was converted into a familiar spirit, which taught him to

> ... Soar with Plato to the empyreal sphere,
> To the first good, first perfect, and first fair. *

On the return of Tasso to Naples with the marquis, which happened about the eighth of November, he again repaired to his apartments in the monastery of Mount Olivet. †

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* *Essay on Man*, II. 23. Cardan, whose vanity carries him *extra flammantia moenia mundi*, employs a chapter of his life in giving an account of an attendant spirit, under whose particular guardianship he considered himself as being; and his father, he tells us, pretended to the same privilege. "Similes Genii, (says Gabriel Naudaeus,) conceduntur Socrati, Plotino, Ciceroni, Bruto, Cassio, Cæsari, Synesio, Porphyrio, Jamblicho, Chicco Asculano, quin etiam Julio Scaligero, et innumeris aliis, qui vel ambitione ducti, vel in Platonicorum et Cabalistarum scholis innutriti, illud acceptum Geniis suis ferunt, in quo naturae suae sublimitatem mirari citius, et aestimare deberent ... huc tandem redeo, ut Cardanum ex intemperie quâdam animi nusquam aequalis et compositi, absurda multa fecisse, et minime sibi in omnibus consentanea loquutum fuisse, concludam. Scitum est enim melancholicos omnes, cujusmodi eum fuisse in dubio apud me non est, superbos esse, nimiumque sibi blandientes, et elatos; quia melancholia ventosa facit ingenia, et magnarum rerum, ut nominis, honorum, auctoritatis, desiderio flagrantia." *De Cardano Judicium.* See Hesiod, *Op. et Dies*, ver. 121. & Spenser, *F. Queene*, Book II. Canto 12. St. 47.

† Serassi, who is in general extremely accurate with regard to dates, supposes that Tasso remained with Manso at Bisaccio almost the whole of October, and part of No-

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

Here, being somewhat renovated by his visit to the country, he resumed his *Jerusalem*, for the purpose of completing those changes and additions which he had planned. As the

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vember; "quasi tutto l'Ottobre, e parte del Novembre, di quell' anno." [1588] This, however, I cannot reconcile with a letter of our poet, first published by Tiraboschi, (*Storia della Poesia Ital.* Ed. Mathias, vol. III. p. 242,) and dated Naples, 24th October, 1588. This letter is addressed to D. Ferrante, and is exceedingly pathetic. "Many years (says he) I have been constantly infirm, and am at present so, at least as much, if not more than usual; and, indeed, the principal advantage I have hitherto derived from medicine is, not to become worse. Nevertheless, being in a declining age, with a distempered complexion, a disturbed mind, and adverse fortune, nothing can be hoped for without amendment; and much I fear that the close of my sufferings shall not be prosperity, but death. I rise sometimes from these vexing thoughts, as it were from a tempestuous sea, and methinks there then appears not merely a single, but a double harbour. Unable as I am to choose that of philosophy, which I myself would wish, I ought not to refuse to enter into the other, where all human miseries have an end.... I shall go in a few days to the baths of Pozzuolo, or of Ischia, in which are reposed my last hopes. God grant that my poverty may not be an impediment to this remedy." From another letter of Tasso in MS. it would seem he was at Naples on the 9th of November; so that, unless there be an inaccuracy in one of the dates of these two epistles, it would appear that he was at Bisaccio at a different period, or during part of September and October. Perhaps he might have been at Bisaccio at the period mentioned by Serassi, but for a shorter time: as Manso says he went thither, "per non molti giorni," and afterward, "essendosene egli nella fine dell' autumno ritornato col Marchese in Napoli."

Cowper, like Tasso, often represents himself as storm-beaten and shipwrecked, a favourite metaphor of our author, in speaking of his misfortunes. Thus, in the *Cast-away*, written by the English poet in the deepest gloom of his distemper, after giving a versified account of a man, who, in Anson's voyage, is described as falling over-board in a storm, and is forced to be abandoned to the waves, he concludes with saying, that

—Misery still delights to trace
Its semblance in another's case.

No voice divine the storm allay'd,
No light propitious shone,
When, snatch'd from all effectual aid,
We perish'd each alone;

CHAP. XX.
A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

Count of Paleno, however, far from being deterred by the prohibition of his father, was still eager, in a very high degree, to be the host of our poet, and importuned him for this purpose; he, either tired of Naples, or, in order not to be a cause of discord between the count and the prince his father, alleged that he was under a necessity of returning to Rome. His motive for this, he said, was to recover, by means of Cataneo, some of his works which he had left at Bergamo in the hands of Licino; and to hasten also the arrival of his books from Mantua, as he had heard nothing satisfactory concerning them, during the year which had now elapsed since his departure from that court. He was the more readily induced to leave Naples for some time, since this could be no hindrance to his lawsuit, as he had not yet discovered who were to be the defendants. He had repeatedly

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But I beneath a rougher sea,
And whelm'd in deeper gulphs than he.

Life, iv. 184.

Writing, too, (when in the same condition,) of a journey to the coast, and contrasting the effect of its scenery on his own mind with that of a friend, he thus expresses himself:

To me the waves that ceaseless broke,
Upon the dangerous coast,
Hoarsely, and ominously, spoke
Of all my treasure lost.

Your sea of troubles you have past,
And found the peaceful shore;
I tempest-toss'd, and wreck'd at last,
Come home to port no more.

Ibid. p. 282.

CHAP. XX.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

written both for documents, and for his books, to different friends, both in Bergamo and Mantua; and it is difficult to account for their inattention and indifference. He had also addressed a letter to the Duke Vincenzo, who he feared had retained his books as pledges, or hostages for his faith, beseeching that he would give up them, as he had already liberated himself. Tasso remarked, that of his fidelity and respect, the duke had much better security (than his books,) in his attachment, and in his strong and lasting gratitude for so many and so signal favours. He added, that, as his health was now despaired of, he hoped that Vincenzo would at least deign to favour him in his studies, which were now his only consolation. *

Tasso leaves Naples.

Torquato, having thus formed the resolution of quitting Naples, he took leave of the good monks, who had received and treated him with such kindness, and went to spend some days with Alexander de' Grassi, a native of Bergamo, and distant relation. By this gentleman he was hospitably entertained, and, being kindly furthered on his journey, he arrived at Rome on the ninth of December, 1588.

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† Vol. IX. p. 175. The letter is dated Naples, September 24. 1588.

CHAPTER XXI.

Distressful situation of Tasso on his arrival at Rome.—He abides in the mohastery of Santa Marid Nuova.—His literary employments.—Is dismissed the house of Cardinal Gonzaga.—Resides in an hospital.—Is invited to Florence.—Graciously received by the Grand Duke.—Returns to Rome.—His disappointments there.—Tasso leaves Rome, and visits Mantua.

A. D. 1588—1591.
Aet. 44—47.

CHAP. XXI.
A. D. 1588.
Aet. 44.

NEVER, as has been seen from the preceding story, was the trite maxim, that the life of a literary man is to be found in his writings, less applicable to a biography than to that of Tasso. By all who view the number of his compositions, it would be at once supposed, that they were the labours of a man who enjoyed a long protracted existence of uninterrupted ease, health, and leisure. It would appear, however, that a life of agitation, unless excessive, is favourable to study;

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

and some of the best,* as well as the most voluminous writings which are in the possession of mankind, were the fruits of hours snatched from the turmoil of business, or produced in the evening of a toilsome life. Such are the works of Tully and of Bacon, almost unexampled in value as well as in extent; nor is it in the gloom of a cloister, nor in the soft ease of academic bowers, that the energies of genius are most willingly and most successfully exerted.

Arrives at Rome.

On the arrival of Tasso at Rome, he alighted at the palace of Cardinal S. Gonzaga, where, not being, perhaps, received with all the warmth he expected, he soon afterward wrote a billet to his friend Niccolò degli Oddi, informing him of his being in the city, and of his desire to speak with him.* This good abbot having some idea of the poet's situation, conducted him to his monastery of S. Maria Nuova. Among the letters of Tasso, is one to Constantini, written on the tenth of December, which gives a sufficiently distressing picture of his situation prior to the visit of Oddi. "I have returned," says he, "to Rome from Naples, and have brought back with me all the miseries from which I hoped to be delivered in that most noble and splendid city. These hopes have been so fallacious, that I find myself more unhappy than ever, which I have perceived since I came in many ways, and particularly as I cannot find a friend who will aid me in satisfying the custom-house. Oh, how I would have been

* Vol. IX. 375.

delighted with the presence here of my dear Constantini! What vexes me still more, is the injurious detention of my trunk for the matters of last year; nor needed the memory of the wrongs I then suffered to have been revived. I should have had great need of six scudi, which I expected from your courtesy; and it would have been a double obligation, if I had found them here at present, to make use of them in my necessity. But Signior Claudius, your uncle, would not accommodate me with them, so that I cannot extricate from the custom-house a casket, for which a demand is made of four ducats. I grieve, too, that I have not hitherto found an apartment or lodging in a palace, or in some other place, at Rome; and, unless my affairs succeed more prosperously, I cannot but complain, as, in proportion to the friends I ought to have, so are my obstacles. I have seen the library of his Holiness, which is most beautiful, and worthy of a sovereign prince, and it deserves the sonnet which you have written in its praise; if I shall have leisure, I will write a sonnet on the same subject, and I kiss your hands." †

This short letter may be considered as in some degree affording a picture in miniature of the life of Tasso. He is accustomed, and still expects, to lodge in a palace, and yet finds the utmost difficulty to obtain four ducats. He is oppressed by hardships, and a sense of misery; yet, by and by, his mind flits away from them to some subject which might

* Vol. IX. p. 524.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1588. Aet. 44.

occupy his muse. Wretched as he often was, he possessed resources which are known to few; and enjoyed, amidst his literary pursuits, some hours of rapture, and many of oblivion.

Abides in the monastery of S. Maria Nuova.

Immediately on taking up his residence in the monastery, our poet, though still as infirm and oppressed with melancholy as ever, * began to review and correct his works, with the design of publishing them in several volumes, in an uniform manner. He hoped thus to be delivered from his difficulties, provided he should be able to print them on his own account, with the privileges of all the states of Italy. For this purpose, he frequently wrote to his dearest friend Constantini, who was then at Venice, requesting him to use his good offices with that republic, that its printers might be prevented from usurping his rights. † Notwithstanding his old infirmities, and the addition of a considerable degree of fever for three months, Tasso not only reviewed many of his former works, but composed new ones. ‡ He had never, however, the satisfaction of publishing this corrected edition, nor of receiving that pecuniary remuneration which was due to so much genius, and to so many labours. He even complains at this time that he was despised as a writer; an idea which seems to have had no foundation but in his own

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* Father Oddi, in a letter to Pellegrino, dated 20th December, 1588, says, "Il Sig. Tasso, il quale oggi è quà nel monasterio con me, però più carico d'umori ch'egli mai fosse, saluta, V. S." X. p. 227.

† Vol. IX. p. 525, 6.

‡ *Ibid.* p. 330.

melancholy sensibility. He appeals from the cruelty and envy of his own age, to the judgment of posterity, with that prophetic confidence which accompanies genius, and by which it is never deceived. *

His literary occupations.

Amongst other employments, Tasso collected his *Rime* into three volumes, and wrote a commentary, for the purpose of explaining a part of them. In this, there is a good deal of what in that age was reckoned philosophy; but what perhaps is most remarkable, is the honesty of the author in remarking his remotest imitations of preceding writers.† He composed also an oration in praise of the house of Medici, which he sent to the Cardinal Del Monte to be presented to the grand duke. ‡ This prince had been lately the Cardinal de' Medici, but was now (by the death of his brother without issue,) secularized, and had just concluded a marriage with Christina of Lorraine. On the subject of these nuptials, our poet, though he complains of great sterility of genius, wrote a canzone. || At this period, also, he com-

* Vol. X. p. 3. "Non posso negare, che Io mi doglio oltramisura di esser stato tanto disprezzato dal mondo, quanto non è altro Scrittore di questo secolo." In a letter, too, to Cataneo, X. p. 276, he says, "Non mi contento di sottopormi al giudicio d'alcuno in questo secolo, particolarmente in quel, ch'appartiene a questa sorta di lettere, per le quali prima Io sono stato onorato da alcuni più ch'io non meritava, poi perseguitato da molti più che non era convenevole....Laonde stimo di potermene ragionevolmente richiamare allà posterità." And in an epistle, 10th June, 1589, he writes thus, "In una Orazione ho pensato di lodare me stesso ad imitazione di Aristide, e d'attribuirmi il primo luogo nella Poesia, e tra Filosofi e gli Oratori non contentarmi degli ultimi. Tutto quello, ch'io scriverò, sarà scritto con molta ragione."

† Vol. X. p. 391, *et seq.*

‡ Vol. X. p. 349, VIII. p. 315.

|| Vol. IX. p. 531. VI. p. 274. *Onde sonar*, &c. Tasso, too, at this time, composed an epithalamium on the marriage of the Duke of Bracciano, nephew of the grand duke,

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1589. Aet. 45.

posed a dialogue, which, in honour of his dearest friend, he entitled, *Il Constantino, or of Clemency*. Of the merit of this work, Tasso had himself a very high opinion; "the dialogue," says he, "is excellent, and not merely very ingenious. It is my hard fortune," adds he, "that constrains me to praise it; as I do not hope to find any one who will give it due applause, either through malignity, or ignorance, or both. It is one of, perhaps, a hundred which I intended to compose; but, in my present unhappy circumstances, I fear it will be the last." *

After having remained about four months in the monastery of S. Maria Nuova, during the greater part of which he had been tormented with fever, Tasso, unwilling any longer to incommode the hospitable monks, resolved to return again to the house of Cardinal Gonzaga. Unfortunately, however, the cardinal found it expedient some time afterward to go to the baths, whither our poet, who had a new attack of the fever, did not follow him. † Accordingly, he was again left at the mercy of his old tyrant, the steward George Alario, who, after some time, assumed the licence of bidding him leave the house. ‡ The following distressing

Is dismissed the house of Cardinal Gonzaga.

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ibid. p. 103. *Delle più fresche rose*, &c. Our poet, IX. p. 200, in a letter to the Duchess of Mantua, beseeches her to procure him some abbey, or other ecclesiastical living, which the grand duke had enjoyed while cardinal, and hints that his misfortunes had been owing to the Medici.

* Vol. IX. p. 254. VII. 456. In July, 1589, Tasso was introduced to Sixtus V. "al quale, (says he,) finalmente con molta mia consolazione ho baciato il piede," IX. p. 365. This seems to have been the only favour which the poet ever received from Sixtus.

† Vol. IX. p. 533.

‡ Vol. IX. p. 538. "In quanto al particolare, seguito per conto mio in casa del'

picture of his situation is given by Tasso to his friend Constantini, in a letter of the twelfth of August, 1589: "When I received your last letter, I was discharged the house of Sig. Cardinal Scipio on no new pretence, and without any fault, but my indolence and melancholy. In these almost excessive heats, with a hectic fever, and the utmost languor from an infirmity of many months, I have had the greatest difficulty to provide myself with lodgings. I have found them at last, but the people do not wish me to stay, so that I shall be constrained to return to Naples this September, if they will only have patience to allow me to remain during August, and apply some remedy to my distemper."* Constantini was now secretary to a nobleman of Mantua, and possessed of considerable influence at court; so that Tasso composed a canzone on the birth of the third child of the duke, and sent it to his friend, to be presented to that prince. † "I am always afflicted (says he, in the letter of which I have just now quoted a part,) at the anger of the Duke of Mantua, to which my fortune, rather than my will, gave occasion. But he well knows that I have frequently excused myself for mine insufficiency, and have entreated him, that, if he could not sustain an useless gentle-

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Signor Cardinale Scipione, sappia che egli non mi ha data licenza ma quei di casa, e particolarmente Giorgio Alario, il quale per certo suo naturale istinto, non può soffrire in quella corte alcun Virtuoso: ed ora sono in S. Maria Nuova. Il 24. di Agosto del 1589."

* Vol. IX. p. 536.

† Vol. VI. p. 266. *Crescan le palme*, &c.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1589. Aet. 45.

man, he would at least do me the favour to assist me in the recovery of that part of my mother's dowry which belongs to me, and which my sister wrote me, amounts to two thousand five hundred ducats, besides the usufruct. His highness promised to favour me with the viceroy, who as he told me is his friend; yet after two years of effort, I have obtained nothing, and I imagine that my nephew Antonino has had every thing, yet leaves me in my present difficulties. In this country, it is impossible to live without a horse; but I have neither a horse, nor a friend to conduct me in his chariot, nor night-gown, nor pelisse, nor summer-dress, nor shirts, nor any thing. Thus necessity will drive me to Naples, and I shall consider it as fortunate, if I be not chased like the dogs. If the duke will benignantly resolve to testify towards me his most courteous favour, I shall be extremely obliged to you; and in nothing can he favour me with greater justice or reputation of goodness than in the recovery of those blessed two thousand five hundred ducats, without which, I fear, I shall die in an hospital."

The condition of the poet having been represented to the Duke of Mantua, that prince, had, in spring this year, ordered him to be provided with necessaries, and also with an hundred crowns for his journey, whenever he should depart for Mantua. This commission had come to George Alario, who, because Tasso was not ready or willing to depart, or from some other motive, denied him any assistance, so that, unless a succour of fifteen crowns of gold had come from Naples, he would have been in the utmost distress. "The

hundred crowns," says he in a letter, "were not paid me; and even raiment was denied. I am overwhelmed in every way—by poverty, by indisposition, by adverse fortune, and, amidst so many hardships, I cannot reckon my occupations, since I attend to nothing. The Sig. George ought either to have given me money, or paid for my books and other debts. He ought to have clothed me, and sent me off well accompanied, and with the hope of health."* As his fever still continued, and as he was extremely inconveniently situated in hired lodgings, Tasso was constrained by his friend Oddi to return once more to the monastery of Santa Maria Nuova, where he remained the whole of September, and a part of October. On the fifteenth of this latter month, he thus writes to a friend: "Probably I shall soon go to some other place to seek my fortune, when I shall have become as troublesome to these most candid fathers, as to the purpled cardinals, from whom I cannot have audience."† Whether he conceived himself burdensome to the monks, or was desirous of a change of situation, it is certain, that, in the month of November, Tasso was lying infirm in the hospital of the Bergamese at Rome. This hospital had been founded in a great measure by one of his relations, who, probably, could not have conceived it possible that it would ever afford an asylum to the most illustrious of his name. Certainly, it appears disgraceful to the wealthy of that age, that the greatest man

Resides in a hospital.

* Vol. IX. p. 220.

† Vol. IX. p. 254.

CHAP. XXI.
A. D. 1589. Aet. 45.

of whom modern Italy can boast, should have been constrained, like a mendicant, to take shelter in an hospital. How different was the situation of Tasso, from that of the comparatively happy Cowper! whose cares and solicitudes were soothed and alleviated by the tender sensibility of female friendship.

If this Biography should ever be perused by a young poet, full of genius, of ardour, and of hope, let him here pause, and reflect on the public desertion of the illustrious man whose story it recites. He will thence learn, that the claim which admiration gives to effectual kindness, is easily set aside by indolence and neglect; and that a right which may be demanded from all, will be satisfied by none. In his hour of exultation and of triumph, let him not mistake the attentions of vanity for the fondness of friendship; let him consider that applause is transitory, but that life is long. Truly, it is not my wish to damp the wings of genius; but to impress, earnestly to impress upon the mind, that, if admiration be the result of high intellectual endowments and exertions, happiness and security are the fruits of more humble qualities.

The residence of Tasso in the hospital continued only a very short time, and he again returned to his former apartment in the monastery. Fortune seems now to have been weary of persecuting him; and, after this last act of oppression, smiled on him more favourably till the close of his life. He now hesitated whether he should go to Naples, whither he was warmly invited, (and to which he protracted his journey

from the hope of procuring letters to the viceroy,) or to Mantua. The duke again seemed willing to receive him, and the young duchess wished to thank him in person for the canzone which had been composed on the birth of her child. "I grieve much, (says our poet in a letter to Sig. Fabio Gonzaga, dated November 18th, 1589,) I grieve much that I cannot satisfy you by my presence instead of an answer. If your letters could have invigorated my body as much as my desire, you should not have wished a more prompt obedience. I am still molested by fever; enfeebled by long infirmities; terrified at fortune, and the narrow faith of men. Constrained as I am to doubt every danger, and, above all, oppressed with melancholy, I can find nothing which will console me; possess nothing which can cheer me; nor imagine any thing which can hinder me from despair. I pray, therefore, that, moved to pity by so much misery, you will not only thank the most serene duke for his goodness, but beseech him in my name to pardon my delay and irresolution." *

At this period, Tasso had the satisfaction of hearing from the Cardinal del Monte, that the grand duke had received his oration in a very gracious manner, and had read with much pleasure the canzone which had been composed on the occasion of his nuptials. This was very satisfactory, especially

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* Vol. IX. p. 223.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1590. Aet. 46.

as the Tuscan ambassador at Rome had an order to give him an hundred and fifty ducats, which he did with many courteous expressions, assuring the poet, that, if he inclined to go to Florence, he should be very favourably received. *

Tasso receives a present from the grand duke.

This sort of invitation increased his resolution of hastening his journey to Mantua, that he might have the pleasure of presenting himself to the grand duke on his passage thither. Besides, at Mantua he hoped to meet his friend Constantini, and to have his works copied by his aid, and sent to the press. "Nothing," says he, "persuades more strongly my return to Mantua than the hope of being aided by my Signior Constantini in causing my writings to be copied and printed. I would wish that the rhymes and prose were printed separately with a very elegant type, in folio, or at least in quarto; and that each should consist of three volumes. These would be the loves; the praises; the sacred or spiritual compositions; the letters; the dialogues; the discourses. The rhymes are in a great measure copied, but the prose is in a wretched condition. In addition to these, I would print my tragedy, and heroic poem; which, when reformed, shall, I fondly hope, be marvellous and perfect." †

As the rigour of the season, and other obstacles, prevented his immediate departure from Rome; and, as he was either tired of the monastery, or believed that the monks were tired of him, Tasso returned in February, 1590, to the house

* Vol. IX. p. 222. † *Ibid.* p 540.

of Cardinal Gonzaga. He had, prior to this new arrangement, been induced to expect that he would be treated with equal attention as the cardinal himself; but things turned out very differently. "This last return," says he, "to the house of Cardinal Gonzaga, instead of being an alleviation, has seemed an addition of misery, such has been the increase of my indisposition and infelicity, by the little esteem of my person, and the contempt of my wretched fortune.... He has neither given me his table, nor a bed, nor an apartment, nor attendants suitable to my merit, and to his former courtesy. This conduct he ought the less to have adopted, because in him is increased authority and dignity; in me, fortune and every other good has failed." *

Amidst these vexations, Tasso had the consolation of receiving from the grand duke an express invitation to his court. To this prince, accordingly, he wrote a very pathetic letter, thanking him for his goodness, and expressing his regret that the bad state of his health was such as to render him unable to employ himself as he could wish in his service. "Scarcely risen," says he, "from a new sickness, I have no other wish than to go and throw myself at your feet, and reverence you. But I fear that your highness will be pained by the presence of a wretched and squalid man, who, by the distempers of many years, is burdensome to himself." † The grand duke, sympathising with the afflictions of this dis-

* Vol. X. p. 13. † *Ibid.* p. 354.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1590. Aet. 46.

tinguished poet, ordered his ambassador to visit, and make him a present of an hundred scudi, telling him at the same time, that his presence was desired at Florence, whenever his health would allow him to proceed on that journey. For a long time, as has been stated, Tasso had been invited to Mantua, but he still lingered at Rome, perhaps from an idea that sufficient zeal had not been shown in the invitation, or proper security given for his favourable reception. He still looked, too, towards Naples, being eager in the highest degree for the possession of that property, which would have at once rendered his circumstances easy, and protected him from the humiliation and uncertainty of courts.

Is warmly invited to Mantua.

Whether owing to the reiterated complaints of Tasso, or from the report of his invitation by the grand duke, he had now a decisive answer from Mantua, and warm solicitations to visit that city. Our poet could not contain his joy on the occasion; and nothing seemed now to remain but the recovery also of his ancient patron, the Duke of Ferrara. "Shall it ever really happen (says he, in a letter to Constantini, dated March 23, 1590,) shall it ever happen, that I will be able to exclaim, Oh happy me! having recovered the favour of the Grand Duke, of the Duke of Mantua, and of the Duke of Ferrara, my youthful patron. What a triumvirate would this be! Sufficient to deliver me from the kingdom of the Amazons, or any similar bondage.* I recommend myself;

* This seems an allusion to Ariosto, Canto XIX. St. 57. *et seq.*

pray all of you for my health. I wonder that the bells are not beginning to ring at the miracle." *

On the fifth of April, 1590, Tasso departed for Florence, where he arrived safely, after having remained some days in the monastery of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, by the way. He dismounted at a monastery belonging to monks of the same order at Florence; and it would appear, from the kindness which he met with from these recluses at different periods, that, at least, want of hospitality was not one of their vices.† He was soon afterward presented to the grand duke, who received him (as the poet writes his friends,) in the most affable, and even affectionate manner. "It is impossible," says he, "to pourtray his humanity, his mildness and affability; such has been his courtesy, that I have almost forgot my woes." ‡ Every person, too, of any celebrity or note in

His kind reception at Florence.

* Vol. X. p. 15. In this same letter, Tasso says, "Ho fatta una operetta: *Della virtù de' Romani* contradicendo a Plutarco. Mi sono compiaciuto, e insuperbito di questa mia nuova fattura." In this discourse, (which is printed, *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 274.) our author combats, with considerable eloquence, the opinion of Plutarch, that the fortune of Alexander the Great would have triumphed over that of the Romans, if he had happened to have attacked them. This is a problem, the solution of which has often been attempted, and which must always remain indeterminate.

Addison relates in his Travels, that when he was at Venice, an opera, entitled *Cato*, was in great vogue in that city. "Before Cato kills himself," says he, "you see him withdrawn into his library, where, among his books, I observed the titles of Plutarch and Tasso." To this opera (according to Mr C. Walker,) Addison has been somewhat indebted in the structure of his tragedy.

† A keen dispute afterwards arose between the monks of these two monasteries, in which of them Tasso had composed on Holy Friday, a canzone on the passion of our Lord, beginning, *Alma inferma, e dolente*, and printed, Vol. VI. p. 358.

‡ *Let. ap.* Serassi, p. 441.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1590. Aet. 46.

the city, visited and complimented him; crowds assembled around him to behold him; and it seemed that the Florentines, by the ardour of their attentions, were desirous not only of doing homage to this mighty genius, but to make amends for that obloquy, which had been poured against him from their native city.*

The attentions which Tasso met with at this period from different great personages, may be attributed, I think, in a considerable degree, to the reputation of the reformation of the *Jerusalem Delivered.* Every one hoped, if not the dedication, at least a niche in that immortal work. Amongst others, Ventimiglia, Marquis of Geraci, a Sicilian nobleman, sent the poet a present of some plate, and of an hundred scudi; hinting his wish that some notice should be taken of the presence of his ancestors at the siege of Jerusalem. Tasso was by no means deficient in gratitude, and immediately began the composition of a Pindaric ode, in praise of his benefactor. Unfortunately, however, he was in the situation of Simonides, in Fontaine's fable,† that is, laboured under a want of subject, a circumstance which seems often

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* Scip Ammirato *Orazione in Morte di Torq. Tasso*.—Opuscoli, tom. iii. p. 505.

† See Fab. XIV. *Simonide préservé par les dieux.*

Simonide avoit entrepris
L'Eloge d'un Athlète; et, la chose essayée,
Il trouva son sujet plein de recits tout nus.
Les parens de l'Athlète étoient gens inconnus;
Son père un bon bourgeois; lui, sans autre mérite;

to have happened to Pindar himself, and to which, perhaps, as much as to his enthusiasm, his rambles are to be attributed. "I would wish, (says our poet to the marquis,) that your name should be eternal in my pages, but I cannot promise so much, either from my genius or my fortune. I had begun, in your praise, a canzone, in imitation of Pindar, who often speaks of Sicily; but I cannot be sufficiently prolix in speaking of you, and of your royal house, from want of information. In this I confess my ignorance; which can the less be hid, in proportion as the name of your race and progenitors is illustrious." In another letter, he says, "I have already in my poem written much of your ancestors and yourself; and I shall make particular mention, that you are descended from Tancred the Norman."*

Tires of that city.

Tasso was by this time become extremely tired of Florence, though he seems to have met with the greatest respect; and, by the numerous presents which were made him, enjoyed a temporary wealth. "Neither," says he, "the beauty of the city, nor the courtesy of the grand duke, nor the hopes held out, nor the promises given me, can

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Matière infertile et petite:
Le poète d'abord parla de son héros,
Après en avoir dit ce qu' il en pouvoit dire,
Il se jette à côte, se mette sur le propos
De Castor, et Pollux.

* Vol. IX. p. 331, 332.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1590. Aet. 46.

make me forget the love of my country; nor quench that ancient desire, which

> "Venuto è di dì in dì crescendo meco
> E temo ch'un sepolcro ambeduo chiuda."

This letter is dated on the nineteenth of June, 1590; and on the twenty-fifth of the same month, Torquato thus writes to Constantini: "My affairs, as you know, have turned out in the most wretched manner, so that I am meditating to return to Rome and Naples; where, if I can find lodgings, and a bed in which to repose, my pilgrimage shall have an end. Life, indeed, is itself a pilgrimage; and I am now, I think, at the end of the journey.... Amidst so many constant causes of despair, one little hope remains, that the grand duke will allow me chambers and a bed in the palace of Trinity, at Rome, where I may die without beholding any object which it would be painful to look upon."* Sick and dispirited as he was, our poet, (to use an expression of his own,) was "now carrying on the siege of the terrestrial, that he might triumph in the heavenly Jerusalem."† His principal residence was the monastery of Mont' Oliveto, but this he occasionally changed. Languishing, however, to return to Naples, he imagined that a change of air would be useful to him; and that he might derive some benefit

* Vol. X. p. 19. † *Ibid*, p. 21.

from the baths of Ischia and Pozzuoli. "I am now cured, (he writes to Manso) of one distemper only by another, which, though it may expel the first, does not itself leave me. Indeed, I am subject to various ills, which in various degrees torment me, so that I may conclude with Hippocrates, *Homo totus sit morbus.* Troublesome beyond all others, is that which has not ceased to vex me in Mantua, in Rome, nor in Florence; and which I have vainly sought to remedy by change of air. I allow myself, however, easily to be persuaded, that the waters of the baths shall contribute to my health." In fact, though Tasso had left Rome with the intention of going to Mantua, where he was warmly invited, he returned to the former of these cities, about the tenth of November.

Returns to Rome.

The fatigue of this journey confined our poet a fortnight to bed; and, on his convalescence, he wrote an account of himself to his friends at Naples, and to Constantini, at Mantua. To this gentleman, Tasso made frequent, and sometimes not very delicate applications for money; and, as he had probably dropped some hints about attention to economy, the bard thus justifies himself: "As to myself, I may with truth affirm, that I have never indulged my desires; and, though I was born a gentleman of no low estate, I have neither lived suitably to my birth, which was noble, nor to my education, which was not mean. Hence I marvel that any person should affirm that I squander, or dissipate, any thing; seeing that I go clothed in a manner less honourable than becomes my condition, and that I do not even satisfy

CHAP. XXI.
A. D. 1590. Aet. 46.

an immoderate appetite. Scarcely, during the course of this summer, have I purchased, for my eating, two pairs of melons; and, though I have been almost always indisposed, often I have been contented with beef instead of chicken; and the soup of lettuce, or of gourd, when I could get it, has been considered as a dainty. If, indeed, expending on medicines be squandering, I confess I have wasted in this way a good number of scudi; but I will not confess that the little I have laid out on books is prodigality, since I have need of them, either to learn something, or to remember what I have learned."* It would appear from this, that Tasso did not fare very sumptuously; but it is true also, that he was the most careless of mortals, and that he possessed in a sovereign degree, that negligence and inattention, which is even more fatal to independence than profuseness. In November, 1592, he had thirty scudi stolen from him at once, so that he was forced to have recourse to the Marquis of Villa, for money to purchase clothing. Sometimes we see by his letters that he had got considerable presents, and a few days afterward, he complains of poverty as much as ever. The uncertainty of his revenue, though it ought to have operated otherwise, was, without doubt, one of the causes which contributed to his heedlessness, or extravagance. He expected daily, that some new gift, or some pension, would deliver him from his difficulties; and that, as what he pos-

* Vol. X. p. 23.

sessed would form a very petty treasure; it was needless to hoard it.*

At the time of the arrival of Tasso at Rome, the Cardinals were assembled in conclave, to elect a pontiff, in room of Sixtus V., who had died on the twenty-seventh of August, 1590. His successor, Urban VII., lived only twelve days after his election; and he was succeeded by Cardinal Nicholas Sfondrato, who assumed the name of Gregory XIV. One of the most extraordinary circumstances respecting Tasso, is the ardour and juvenility of his hopes after so many disappointments. The effect of calamities is, in general, to produce a despair of good fortune, and an uneasy distrust, even when she smiles upon us most favourably. But Tasso does not seem to have been the martyr of this species of dejection, and though the blow, when it came, was of course more severe, he had many hours of intervening confidence. This was eminently the case at present. Being intimately acquainted with a favourite secretary of the new pontiff, he conceived such favourable expectations, that he rose from bed, to which he had been for some time confined,

* "It is well known, (says Johnson, in his *Life of Dryden,*) that he seldom lives frugally, who lives by chance. Hope is always liberal, and they that trust her promises, make little scruple of revelling to-day on the profits of to-morrow."..... "As whatever he received, (says the same writer, speaking of Savage,) was the gift of chance, which might as well favour him at one time as another, he was tempted to squander what he had, because he always hoped to be immediately supplied." It might be worth the while to collect and add together the different sums which it is known that Tasso received.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1591. Aet. 47.

and composed a very dignified canzone on the election of Gregory XIV. This canzone was published in January, 1591, and had been written in the preceding month.*

His disappointments.

Our poet expected that he would be immediately introduced to an audience of his Holiness, and splendidly rewarded. This introduction, however, did not take place, each being, no doubt, anxious to secure something for himself during the pontificate of his patron; of the probable uncertain duration of which they had lately seen so striking a lesson. In general, the pope was old at the time of his election; and sometimes a person was chosen for the sole purpose of living a few months, in order that adverse parties might have time to mature their plans. From the beginning of August, 1590, till the beginning of February, 1592, no less than five different princes sat on the pontifical throne. One may judge of the hurry of the creatures, and dependents of each, to provide for themselves; and the little chance a person had of being thought of, who had no other claim to preferment, but the excellence of his poetry. All this Tasso might have learned from the beautiful apologue, and admirable reflexions, in the well-known satire of his brother poet, Ariosto. A householder, (according to this fable,) during a prodigious drought, is at last so happy as to find a spring, which, however, is so scanty, that only one can drink at a time. He himself first quenches his

* Vol. X. p. 26. Vol. VI. p. 246. *Da gran lode,* &c.

thirst; next his family; then his servants, according to their utility or dearness; and afterwards a prodigious train of herds and flocks, in the order of their respective values. The process was a tedious—to a poor magpye, which was perishing for want of water, it seemed an eternal one. In other times, it had amused the householder with its tricks, and chatter; had fondly hoped on the discovery, that it would first (after the family themselves,) be called to the fountain; and now eyed every eager and panting candidate with envy and despair. Finding at length, that it was to be neglected till the last, "Alas!" said the Magpye, "I am not a relation; I contributed nothing to the disclosure of the spring; my only claim is having afforded a little amusement, which, in times like this, is utterly disregarded. I am faint, and must die with thirst before that infinite series be satisfied, so I shall go in search of some other fountain." Such is the abstract of the apologue: the following is the inference, or moral, of the poet:

To those, my cousin! this true story tell,
Who think that I shall quaff the sacred well,
For "mark what numbers wait to quench their thirst,
From nephews down, to fourteenth cousins,—first,—
Next,—those who lent their hand to mount the throne,
And grac'd his temples with the triple crown.——
One, 'I was with him in his exile,' cries,
'I risk'd my neck to save him,' one replies.
A third, advancing on, begins to boast
How much he lent, and how much might have lost:
Another on acknowledgments depends,
For favours to his brother, and his friends;

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1591. Aet. 47.

'When neither horse, nor arms, nor clothes remain'd,
I set him up, and at my cost maintain'd.'

'Mid claims like these, neglected I must wait,
And never drink at all, or drink too late."*

Of the disappointment of Tasso, at his neglect, during the present distribution of refrigeratory draughts, we have a proof, from one of his letters to Constantini, who had come to Rome, as secretary to Don Carlo Gonzaga, sent by the Duke of Mantua, to congratulate the new Pope. Immediately on his arrival, Constantini had invited Tasso to live with him, and treated him in the most soothing and affection-

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C ugin con questo esempio vuò che spacci
Quei che credon che'l Papa porr'innanzi
Mi debba a Neri a Vanni a Lotti e a Bacci:
Li Nepoti e i parenti, che son tanti,
Prim' anno a ber, poi quei che l'ajutaro,
A vestirsi'l più bel di tutti i Manti:
Bevuto ch'abbian questi, gli fia caro
Che bevan quei che contra il Soderino
Per tornarlo in Firenze si levaro:
L'un dice Io fui con Pietro in Casentino
E d'esser preso e morto a rischio venni,
Io gli prestai denar grida Brandino:
Dice un altro a mie spese il frate tenni
Un' anno e lo rimessi in veste e in arme,
Di cavallo, e d'argento lo sovenni.
Se fin che tutti beano aspetto a trarme
La volontà di bere, o me di sete
O secco il pozzo d'acqua veder parme.

Satir. 4a.

* The translation in the text is by a Mr Horton. It is scarcely possible to express in another language the vivacity of the original.

ate manner. He had been ordered by the Duke of Mantua to prevail on the poet to accompany him thither, which Tasso appears, from his letters, to have had much reluctance to visit. The dissatisfaction, however, of our poet, with the court of Rome, co-operated with the entreaties of his friend, to make him leave this city. "To-day, (writes he, in the letter to Constantini, which I have above alluded to,) to-day, fallen from the highest* hope, I have determined to fly from the world; to retire from a crowd to solitude; and from fatigue to quiet. I beseech you, therefore, to do me the favour to send the chest, and few clothes, and the trunk also in your chamber, to Santa Maria del Popolo, where I believe I shall reside, and be sheltered by these good fathers. In my opinion, it will be impossible to find a situation more solitary, or more remote from indignity.... Farewell, dear sir, and leave me in my wonted melancholy. From your chamber, the 7th of February, 1591."*

Departs to Mantua.

As soon as Constantini heard of this resolution, he hastened to his friend, entreating him to lay aside so strange a fancy. He acknowledged that he had not been well treated at Rome; but added, that he would be honourably received at Mantua, whither he had been invited by a letter of the duke himself.† He reminded the poet, that he was almost on the point of departing for that city, and offered to travel slowly, and accompany him by the way. Accordingly, about

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* Vol. X. p. 26.

† Vol. IX. p. 180.

CHAP. XXI.

A. D. 1591. Aet. 47.

the twentieth of February, Tasso left Rome, although the season was exceedingly severe. For some days the two friends were hospitably entertained at his palace by the bishop of Viterbo; and, after a slow and easy journey, they arrived at Mantua on the seventeenth of March, 1591.*

* Vol. IX. p. 434. *Lett. ined.* From Bologna, on the ninth of March, Tasso wrote to the secretary of the Pope, requesting him to obtain from his Holiness "una croce d'oro, vacua, smaltata, piena di Reliquie, o di Orazioni contra i maligni spiriti, e licenza (se la licenza e onore o dignità) di portarla nella cappa o nel sajo." *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 368.

CHAPTER XXII.

Literary employments of Tasso at Mantua.—He tires of that city, and returns to Rome.—Visits Naples.—Is hospitably entertained by the Prince of Conca.—Resides with Manso.—Milton.—Begins a Poem on the Creation.—His lawsuit.—Departs from Naples.—Receives a high compliment from a Robber on his journey.—Is warmly patronised by Cardinal Cynthio Aldrobandino, nephew of Pope Clement VIII.—Dedicates to that Ecclesiastic his "Gerusalemme Conquistata."—Writes a "Judgment," to prove the superiority of this poem to the Jerusalem Delivered.—Death of Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga.—Remarks on the "Sette Giornate."

A. D. 1591 — 1594.
AET. 47 — 50.

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1591. Aet. 47.

THE eagerness with which Tasso was invited to Mantua, may be attributed, as I have already remarked, to the desire in its prince, of being celebrated in his new or reformed work, the *Conquest of Jerusalem*. He had gone thither very

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1591. Aet. 47.

unwillingly, and he had scarcely arrived, till he wished to be away. In a letter to Cardinal Gonzaga, dated the twenty-ninth of March, 1591, our poet thus writes: "I pray you to love me as you were wont, and to command me, if in any respect I am able to serve you; and, finally, to make my books be taken care of, which remained in your house. Having no intention of staying in this city, I design to return to Rome and Naples; and there to complete my poem, if life shall suffice for so long a journey. I hope, however, the Duke of Mantua will not allow me to depart so disconsolate from this court, as I did from that of Rome."*

One of the principal projects of our poet, at this period, was to procure a complete and elegant edition of his works; and different printers were applied to by himself, and his friend Constantini, for this purpose.† Though they would have been sufficiently willing to engage in this scheme, especially had he allowed his *Jerusalem* to be of the number, some obstacle always occurred. The only writings Tasso had prepared for the press, were his Rhymes, with a commentary; his *Jerusalem Conquered* was yet unfinished, and this, he writes to a printer, he wished to accompany with another poem, as the *Iliad*, with the *Odyssey*.‡ As to the prose

* Vol. IX. p. 430. see also p. 429. † *Ibid*, p. 282.

‡ Ora non so quel ch'io possa prometter di me stesso, non avendo a perfezione l'opera principale, che è la *Gerusalemme*, la qual voleva accompagnar con un altro poema, come è *l'Iliade*, coll' *Odissea*, vol. IX. p. 100; and in a letter to Giolito, he says, Voi, Signor

compositions, of the greater part of them he had neither the original manuscripts, nor the printed copies; so that never was a person less prepared to publish a complete edition. What added to the vexation of Tasso, was, that soon after his arrival at Mantua, his friend Constantini was forced to leave it for some time; so that, in addition to the want of his society, our poet had nobody in whom he could confide to copy his *Jerusalem*, which he was now composing. "Acknowledge, (says he, in a letter to that gentleman, of the twenty-ninth of June,) acknowledge among your sins to your confessor, the craft, if I may not say the treachery, which you have used towards me. You have conducted me to this city, with so many hopes, and now both you and the hopes have disappeared.... Besides having nobody whom I can trust to copy my poem, I wished your assistance in the Greek tongue, of which you are so great a master. But you are unwilling to undergo this fatigue with me, who am now aged, and who, in one respect at least, would wish to resemble Cato."*

The incessant labour of Tasso, his anxiety, and, perhaps, the dampness of the climate, brought upon him a violent indisposition, which continued during the summer. He had

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mio, potete compiacermi, e come Io credo, senza vostro danno, facendo ristampare tutte le composizioni particolarmente, che usciranno dalle mie mani in tre volumi separati, come Io aveva disegnato, ed in altrettanti le prose. Sia eccettuata da questo numero la mia *Gerusalemme*, la quale non vuole compagnia, p. 282.

* Vol. X. p. 27.

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1591. Aet. 47.

scarcely recovered from this, when, either to testify his gratitude to the Duke of Mantua, or to recommend himself still farther to that prince, he began to compose a poem on the genealogy of the family of Gonzaga.* It is frightful to consider the number and greatness of his exertions; and, had he possessed the most vigorous constitution, it is impossible he could ever have been well. The fine etherial spirit of his genius had evaporated at the conclusion of the *Jerusalem Delivered;* but, had his talents remained in all their force, what could have been expected from a brain continually heated, and organs for ever overstrained by fatigue?

In November, this year, the first part of our poet's *Rime*, appeared, accompanied with the commentary. It was neatly executed by Osanna, at Mantua; and, while this first part was in the press in that city, Tasso, for the sake of haste, had sent the second part to Licino, to be printed at Bergamo. This, however, after many promises of speed, was not effected, a circumstance which gave him infinite vexation, as, while he dedicated the first part to the Duke, the second was to be inscribed to the Duchess of Mantua. In this city Tasso had now remained eight months; had become exceedingly tired of it; and wished to visit Rome. The young Duchess, who esteemed him highly, was desirous of retaining him; but, seeing that constraint increased his

* Vol. X. p. 28. Vol. VI. p. 317. *Sante Muse Immortali*, &c.

melancholy, she bestowed on him some gifts, and he was honourably dismissed.

CHAP. XXII.

A. D. 1591. Æt. 47.

Tasso leaves Mantua, and returns to Rome.

Accordingly, about the middle of November, 1591, Tasso left Mantua; and, after being confined for some days by sickness at Florence,* arrived at Rome, about the tenth of December. In that city he was kindly received by Maurice Cataneo, who had been secretary, as we have seen, of Cardinal Albano. This ecclesiastic had died a few months before, and, having left his secretary in easy circumstances, he behaved to his unhappy friend in a much more courteous manner than he had been accustomed to do during the life of his master.† Perhaps his heart was warmed by his late inheritance; perhaps, during the life of the Cardinal, he thought it improper to be liberal of what he considered as not his own.

Meanwhile, Pope Innocent, who had succeeded Gregory, having died after a pontificate of two months, Tasso learned that it was probable a Cardinal who was much his friend would be elected, a circumstance which gave him much pleasure, as he was at this time desirous of some ecclesiastical dignity. In contemplation of this, he had removed, in the new edition of his *Rime*, all those passages which might give offence, even to the most scrupulous; a resolution which, indeed, required no other prompter than the delicacy of his own conscience.‡ The Cardinal, however, and Tasso were

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* Vol. X. p. 53. † Serassi, p. 454.

‡ Ho raccolte tutte le mie Rime in quattro libri, che saranno quattro parti; nella prima

CHAP. XXII.
A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

disappointed; and, as his friend, the Count of Paleno, was become, by the death of his father, Prince of Conca, and Grand Admiral of Naples, he determined to go thither, where he was invited by that nobleman. His principal difficulty was the want of money, as the prince had sent no provision for the way, a circumstance which our poet took notice of to him in a letter, which Serassi considers as extremely facetious and agreeable. That biographer, however, takes care to quote no part of it, nor, in truth, can it be cited as a model of attic or jocund pleasantry.* The grand and solemn mind of Torquato seems (like that of our own divine Milton,) to have been incapable of the sprightliness and flexibility, which are requisite for wit; and the attempts of both in this way, like the gambols of the elephant, are awkward and unwieldy.

At last, however, the poet, invited both by Paleno and by Manso, encouraged too by the hope of gaining his succession, left Rome about the middle of January, 1592. On his arrival at Naples, he was received by the prince, (as we are told by Manso,) not merely in a kind, but in a very distinguished manner.† Magnificent apartments were assign-

Departs to Naples.

è il Commento. Vorrei confidarle alla fede di persona, che fosse desiderosa della mia gloria, e della fama immortale, ma in modo che'l mondo non s'avedesse della mia ambizione, o della vanità, la quale potesse impedirmi qualche dignità ecclesiastica, alla quale aspiro.

* Vol. IX. p. 400.

† *Vita del Tasso*, p. 209. Serassi is particularly careful to say nothing of Tasso's addresses for favour and protection to the Neapolitans, as our poet in them represents himself as their countryman. X. 369. IX. 217, 395.

ed him; numerous attendants were ordered to supply his wants; and every thing was so ordered, that he was treated as a person of the very highest quality. The prince too behaved to him with the utmost ease and familiarity, so that Tasso was greatly comforted, and had leisure in this tranquil and dignified situation to attend to his studies. He resumed, therefore, his heroic poem, which his sickness at Mantua had interrupted; and, as he had now reached the last book, a great part of which he intended to form of materials derived from his former poem, little labour remained, and he soon expected its conclusion. "I desire (says he, in a letter to Cataneo, in which he gives an account of this circumstance,) I desire that the reputation of this my increased, and illustrated, and almost reformed poem, may take away the credit from the other, which has been given it, rather by the folly of men, than by my judgment. It will be impossible, indeed, to behold each of these productions with equal favour, without passing upon me sentence of death, as the best reason which I could adduce in the last apology of my life, is the certain knowledge which I have of myself and my productions." *

Election of Clement VIII.

The news now arrived of the election of Cardinal Aldobrandino, who, on his elevation to the pontifical dignity, assumed the name of Clement VIII. As there was scarcely a Cardinal, with whom, or with whose secretary, Tasso was

* Vol. IX, p. 363.

CHAP. XXII.

A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

not acquainted, every new election inspired him with hope. He immediately wrote a letter to Paolino, secretary of the new pontiff, who (as he had learned,) promised to patronise him; and, laying aside for a while his heroic poem, composed a canzone on the virtues of Clement.* This prince was a man of very respectable character; but it is impossible not to regret the humiliating eulogies to which the poverty and dependence of Torquato constrained him. No person was originally possessed in a higher degree of that "niceness of nature," of that "honest haughtiness and self-esteem," which Milton boasts of as a part of his character. But the cruelty of his destiny compelled him to deject, and plunge himself into low descents; and to agree, in some measure, to the open and saleable prostitution of his heaven-born muse.

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame;

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* Vol. IX. p. 431. VI. 248. *Questa fatica estrema,* &c. About a month after his election, his Holiness was seized with a violent indisposition, which seems to have been, in some degree, the effect of the prediction of his death by astrologers. Tasso was much afflicted, on the occasion; and, in a letter to Paolini, (Vol. IX. p. 431,) thus expresses himself: Le desidero lunghissima vita; e prego Iddio, che faccia vano il giudicio degli astrologi....Piaccia a sua Divina Maestà, di guardar Sua Beatitudine dal pericolo minacciatole dalle stelle, e dagli influssi celesti. "Vue dans son ensemble, (says La Place,) l'Astronomie est le plus beau monument de l'esprit humain, le titre le plus noble de son intelligence. Séduit par les illusions des sens et de l'amour propre, il s'est regardé pendant long-tems, comme le centre du mouvement des astres; et son orgueil a été puni par les vaines frayeurs qu'ils lui ont inspirées." *Exposition du Système du Monde,* ad finem,

Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride,
With incense kindled at the muse's flame.*

Meanwhile a circumstance happened, which gave Tasso much uneasiness, and disgusted him with his friend, the Prince of Conca. The *Conquest of Jerusalem* was now almost finished; and the prince, proud that such a work was to be completed in his house, and desirous that it should thence be published, perhaps under his own auspices, gave orders to a trusty servant, to have a very strict eye after the volume. He was commanded to observe where it was laid by the poet, and not to permit it to be carried out of the house. The long habit of defence had rendered Tasso uncommonly suspicious; he soon observed the circumstance, and was exceedingly offended. His suspicions (as we are informed by this nobleman himself,†) were communicated to the Marquis of Villa, who, assured of the fact, went to

* ——————The tender arts
Of mimic fancy, and harmonious joy,
To priestly domination, and the lust
Of lawless courts, their amiable toil
For three inglorious ages have resign'd
In vain reluctant: And Torquato's tongue,
Was tun'd for slavish paeans, at the throne
Of tinsel pomp.—

Pleasures of the Imagination, II. *v.* 30.

Perdoni, (writes the poet, on one occasion,) a me quest' ardimento di lodar me stesso, poichè io così agevolmente ho perdonata l'importunità d'aver lodati molti contra mia voglia, e contra il proprio giudicio. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 171, also p. 372.

† *Vita del Tasso*, p. 210, et seq.

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

the apartments of Torquato, whom with the one hand he led out, while with the other he carried the *Jerusalem*. The servant had not the courage to oppose the marquis, who conducted his friend to his own house. While all this happened, the prince had been absent; but being informed of it at his return, he wisely determined to feign himself ignorant of any offence given or received. Agreeably to this, he went on the day following to the house of Manso; remained to dine with him and Tasso; and affirmed, that it made no difference in which of their houses the poet remained. He remarked, that, as long as Tasso lived with the marquis, he should not consider himself as separated from him, so that our bard was quite appeased; and, although he still continued with Manso, he often visited at the house of the prince.

At this period, the Marquis of Villa lived in the delightful palace, which, we may recollect, has been described as built on the shore of the sea. It was surrounded on all sides by the most delightful gardens, which the spring was now embellishing with blossoms and with flowers. It was probably at this abode, consecrated by the residence of Tasso, that Manso, many years afterwards, received an equally illustrious guest. It was here, probably, that Milton enquired about this mighty genius, while his bosom was burning to emulate his glory. Like Cæsar, perhaps, (when he viewed the statue of Alexander,) he wept to think how little he was already distinguished. If he lifted up his eyes, he might behold, at a distance, the sepulchre of Virgil; while

Milton.

around him were landscapes, beautiful as the Eden which he was destined to create.

All the biographers of Milton, from Toland to Symmons, have conjectured that his meeting with Manso increased with new vehemence his thirst of poetical immortality, and even suggested his design of writing an epic work. "I don't question, (says Toland,) but it was from Manso's conversation, and their discourses about Tasso, that he first formed his design of writing an epic poem."—"His acquaintance with Manso, (says Mr Hayley, in his very valuable *Life of Milton*,) may be regarded as the most fortunate incident of his foreign excursion. Nothing could have a greater tendency to preserve and strengthen the seeds of poetic enterprise in the mind of the young traveller, than his familiarity with this eminent and engaging personage, the bosom friend of Tasso, the friend who had cherished that great and afflicted poet under his roof, in a season of his mental calamity; had restored his health; reanimated his fancy; and given a religious turn to the latest efforts of his majestic muse. The very life of Tasso, which this noble biographer had written, with the copious, and minute fidelity of personal knowledge, and with the ardour of affectionate enthusiasm, might be sufficient to give new energy to Milton's early passion for poetical renown; his conversation had probably a still greater tendency to produce this effect. Circumstances remote, and apparently of little moment, have often a marvellous influence on the works of imagination; nor is it too wild a conjecture to suppose that the zeal of

CHAP. XXII.

A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

Manso, in speaking to Milton, of his departed friend, might give force and permanence to that literary ambition, which ultimately rendered his aspiring guest the great rival of Tasso, and, in the estimation of Englishmen, his superior."*

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* Toland, *Life of Milton*, p. 14. Hayley, *Life*, &c. p. 49. Sentiments similar to those just quoted, are expressed by Dr Symmons, the latest and very able biographer of Milton. "The expanding consciousness of his own powers, the commendations of the Italian literati, and, above all, perhaps, the conversation and encouraging judgement of the friend of Tasso, seem now to have rendered him more resolute in his pursuit of the epic palm.—His intercourse with Manso may perhaps be classed with the prime benefits resulting from his transalpine visit." P. 124.

The probability of these conjectures, I think, I am prepared to strengthen, in some degree, by new arguments. This, however, will require such prolixity of discussion, that I must refer my reader to the Appendix, (No. XXXV.)

Milton's eagerness to be acquainted with Manso, (chiefly, without doubt, or altogether, owing to the friendship of this nobleman with Tasso,) appears from his availing himself of the introduction of a hermit, with whom he had travelled from Rome, and who, it is probable, was little better acquainted with Manso than himself. "Neapolim perrexi, (says he, in his *Defensio Secunda*,) illic per Eremitam quendam quicum Româ iter feceram, ad Ioannem Baptistam Mansum, Marchionem Villensem, virum nobilissimum atque gravissimum, (ad quem Torquatus Tassus, insignis Poeta Italus *de Amicitia* scripsit,) sum introductus, eodemque usus, quamdiu illic fui, sane amicissimo; qui et ipse me per urbis loca et Proregis aulam circumduxit, et visendi gratiâ haud semel ipse ad hospitium venit, discedenti seriò excusavit se, tametsi multò plura detulisse mihi officia maxime cupiebat, non potuisse illâ in urbe, propterea quòd nolebam in religione esse tectior."

The following is the preface of Milton to his beautiful epistle, *Mansus*: "Joannes Baptista Mansus, Marchio Villensis, vir ingenii laude, tum literarum studio, nec non et bellica virtute apud Italos clarus in primis est. Ad quem Torquati Tassi dialogus extat *De Amicitia* scriptus; erat enim Tassi amicissimus; ab quo etiam inter Campaniæ principes celebratur, in illo poemate cui titulus. *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, lib. 20.

Fra cavalier magnanimi, e cortesi
Risplende il Manso.———

Is authorem Neapoli commorantem summa benevolentiâ prosecutus est, multaque ei de-

CHAP. XXII.

A D. 1592. Aet. 48.

The organs of Tasso being in a considerable degree refreshed, and his melancholy dissipated by the solace and delights of the beautiful residence of his friend, he prosecuted, with new ardour, the completion of his *Jerusalem*. This poem being ended, though not finished, he began another, at the solicitation of Donna Vittoria Loffredo, mother of the Marquis of Villa. This lady was a woman of talents, was well versed in the sacred writings, and extremely religious. The mind of the poet was also devotional, so that they had frequent and delightful conversations on the ways of Providence; the spiritual and moral relations of man; his duties, and his destiny. There is, perhaps, no discourse more sweet than speculations of this sort, by persons of genius and research; and its "pleasing sorcery" is preferred by Milton, even to the sound of "notes angelical."* Counselled by this matron to make a hallowed use of his talents, Tasso resolved to finish his poetical career with a sacred poem. This, it is probable, had long been his intention; and that he had at once the merit of obedience, and the pleasure of gratifying his own inclination. In Roman Catholic countries, it was not uncommon for the poets, (as was the case too with the ladies,) when in the decline of life, to have scruples of conscience, and to atone by their evening

Tasso begins a poem on the creation.

tulit humanitatis officia. Ad hunc itaque hospes ille, antequam ab ea urbe discederet, ut ne ingratum se ostenderet, hoc carmen misit." Milton's visit to Italy happened in 1638.

* *Paradise Lost*, book II. *v.* 555.

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

efforts, for what they then considered as the follies of the day. Corneille, in his old age, versified *Thomas a Kempis;* Racine concluded his labours with *Esther* and *Athalie;* and Crebillon wrote epigrams against unbelievers. The subject chosen by our poet was the seven days of creation, a work which death prevented him from finishing. It is probable, as has been remarked by the Earl of Stirling, that the attention of Tasso might have been directed to this particular subject, by the great fame of the *Semaine* of Dubartas. "There is no man, (says this poetical nobleman,) doth satisfy me more, than that notable Italian, Torquato Tasso, in whom I find no blemish, but that he doth make Solyman, by whose overthrow he would grace Rinaldo, to die fearfully; belying the part he would have personated during his life, as if he would chuse rather to err in imitating others, than to prove singular by himself. Speron Sperone, thinking his exquisite work of *Godfred* to be too full of rich conceits, and more dainty than did become the gravity of such a work, said that it was a heroic poem written in madrigals. And yet, when he wrote a week of the creation, in emulation of Dubartas, it did no way approach to the perfections of the other; which doth confirm me in my first opinion, that every author hath his own genius directing him, by a secret inspiration, to that wherein he may most excel, and, as I said, excelling in some things, and none in all."* The poem of Dubartas is a work on the creation,

* Ext. in *Works of Drummond of Hawthornden,* folio, p. 160, 1711. Tasso seems to have anticipated the chivalrous objection made above, to his death of Solyman, for he

which was once so popular, that it went through thirty editions, in the short space of eleven years. An excellent critic, (Mr Dunster, in his *Considerations on Milton's Early Reading*,) has shewn, almost in a convincing manner, that the English translation of *Dubartas*, by Silvester, was the *rudimenta poetica* of the poet of Paradise, in his native language. Thus, perhaps, a work which is now forgotten, or remembered only for the purpose of satire,* formed to the two most distinguished of modern bards, a subject of emulation and instruction; arrested the attention of the old age of the one, and a few years afterward fanned the flame of poetry and devotion in the youthful bosom of his illustrious rival.

His lawsuit.

Amidst his attentions to these sublime contemplations, Tasso, however, did not neglect his lawsuit. He had now discovered that his claims lay against the Prince of Avellino, as heir of his last maternal uncle; and against one Anna Sciacca, who had got a considerable sum of money in loan from one of these uncles. From the prince he demanded,

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says, in one of his letters: La morte del Soldano nell' ultimo non piacerà, a chi dispiace quella di Turno; pur credo che Virgilio facesse con molte ragioni quel che fece, e credo di saperne alcuna. Vol. X. p. 126. The death of the Soldan has nothing in it cowardly; his irresolution is produced by peculiar circumstances of distress; and Tasso had already painted, in the combat of Argantes with Tancred, the most ferocious energy.

* ..... le rat ennemi
Si funeste aux auteurs, dont la dent téméraire
Ronge indifférement Dubartas, ou Voltaire.
De Lille *l'Homme des Champs*, chant. 3me, ad fin.

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

as his right, half the palace of Gambacorti, which had belonged to his mother's family, and in which, as I have mentioned, the poet resided a short time during his youth. Amongst other obstacles which were raised, it was affirmed by the opposite procurator, that Tasso could not be a legitimate plaintiff, on account of his insanity. To this absurd and inhuman objection, it was replied by his lawyer, (as formerly by the defender of Sophocles,) could the poem which his client had just composed, and those which he had lately published, could these be the works of a man deprived of understanding? "Magnificus Procurator (It is thus the counsel of Tasso designates the Goth who was his opponent,) Magnificus Procurator ex adverso, quod nondum legit poemata, quae ex hoc divino ingenio in publicum quotidie prodeunt, bene potest dubitare de sanitate mentis; sed non adm. Illust. D. Commissarius."* Meanwhile, as the lawsuit was prolonged, and, as Tasso was becoming tired of his situation, he determined to go to Rome, where he had sanguine, and, it would appear from the event, well-grounded hopes of favour from the new pontiff. As he did not wish to leave his friends at Naples without some excuse, he wrote to Paolini, seeretary of Clement, to procure him an invitation from his Holiness.† Towards the end of April, he departed from Naples, and his passage through Capua,

Tires of Naples.

* Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 460.

† Vol. IX. p. 432.

on the twenty-sixth of that month, was deemed of sufficient importance to be recorded in the archives of that city.*

In his journey to Rome, in company with several gentlemen, Tasso received the most flattering compliment which it is possible to conceive. At Mola di Gaeta, they were stopped by the dread of one Marco di Sciarra, a most daring robber, and captain of a numerous troop of banditti. "We are here at Mola, (writes our poet in one of his letters, dated April 28th, 1592,) detained by the dread of Marco di Sciarra, who is in the neighbourhood with a great number of ruffians. Yesterday, we are told, they killed many persons of this country; others they took prisoners, and indeed, unless care be taken, this may turn out another war of Spartacus."—"The other night, (says he, in a letter written the day after that just quoted,) this whole country resounded with cries, and with the screams of females. I wished to go forward, and stain with blood the sword which you gave me, but I was withheld." Tasso appears, from every account, to have possessed the intrepidity of Cæsar; but, on this occasion, there was no need of exerting his prowess. Sciarra having

Compliment which Tasso receives from a robber.

* The following is the record of this circumstance: "A' 26. Aprile, 1592, è passato per questa città il Sig. Torquato Tasso, uomo di tanto valore, e dotto in ogni scienzia, e particolarmente in Poesia, Autore dell' opera intitolata *Gerusalem Liberata*, e di altri scritti, che con tanta gloria sua van per le mani di tutti; ed è stato invitato dal Sig. Gio. Batista Attendolo non men dotto di lui in dette scienzie, e dal Sig. Primicerio Camillo Pellegrino similmente persona dotta e letterata: il quale ha promesso al ritorno che farà di Roma albergare per alcuni dì con detti Signori, poichè addesso, cavalcando col Procaccio, non ha potuto lasciar la compagnia." *Vita del Tasso*, p. 461.

CHAP. XXII.
A. D. 1592.
Aet. 48.

learned that this distinguished poet was at Mola, sent to compliment him. He offered him not only a free passage, but protection by the way; and assured him that he and his followers would be proud to execute his orders. Tasso rendered many thanks to this generous outlaw, the sensibility and exaltation of whose nature seem to have been very different from that of the magnific procurator at Naples. The poet, however, declined accepting his protection, not from any doubt of his honour, but because he thought it would be indelicate to leave the gentlemen by whom he was accompanied. When Sciarra heard this, he sent notice that he would leave, on his account, the ways open for himself and his friends; so that, without any farther obstacle, they arrived safely at Rome.*

His favourable reception at Rome.

On his arrival in this city, Tasso found that Paolino, secretary of Clement, had indeed befriended him, and he was at once graciously received into the house of the two nephews of that pontiff. Of these young men, the elder, Cynthio, was son of a sister, the other (Peter Aldobrandini,) of a brother of his Holiness. Each of them possessed excellent

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* Manso, p. 219. Mr Hoole, in narrating the foregoing incident, thus expresses himself, when speaking of the first offer of Sciarra: "Tasso returned him thanks, but declined accepting the offer; *not chusing, perhaps, to rely on the word of a person of such character.*" This seems to me to betray an ignorance of the human heart. A proposal of such delicacy could not have been made, it could not have been conceived, but by a person who had an intention of fulfilling it.

Sciarra and his banditti were (we may recollect,) not the only robbers who gave a proof of the very high veneration in which Tasso was held. See *above*, p. 146.

dispositions, and considerable talents; and both of them favoured the poet. His principal friend, however, was Cynthio, who, besides being the elder, was more versed than the other in science and literature; his father, too, had been a countryman of Tasso; and he, himself, was of a very affable and courteous temper. Peter, on the other hand, was of a retired and taciturn disposition; his manners were not very inviting; and he courted retirement and the shade. Both of these young men were raised to the purple by their uncle Clement VIII., about two years after his election to the pontifical dignity.*

The affable condescension of Cynthio; the particular attachment which he shewed to Tasso; and his zeal in his behalf, wrought so much on the grateful mind of this poet, that he determined to dedicate to him his *Gerusalemme Conquistata.* Motives of interest had also no doubt their effect, as Cynthio was, during the first years of his uncle's pontificate, a peculiar favourite of that prince, and was admitted by him into his confidence, and a considerable share of the government. Clement, it was reasonable to think, would

* For a minute account of these two nephews of Pope Clement, and a delineation of their characters, the reader may consult the *Memoirs* of Cardinal Guido Bentivoglio, lib. I. cap. 5. The following passage of one of Tasso's letters, written from Naples, 17th April, 1592, gives a very favourable view of Clement's own disposition: "Son trattenuto, (a Napoli,) sotto pretesto di cortesia; ma questo è un far forza agli uomini. Verrò dunque co' miei impedimenti, fra quali e' grandissimo il mio tamburo...tanto è la speranza che Io ho nella clemenza di sua Santità: e quasi mi doglio di non averle fatto ingiuria, perchè non le ho data occasione di usarla meco, siccome fa con tutti gli altri." Vol. X. 31.

CHAP. XXII.
A. D. 1592. Aet. 48.

feel gratified at the dedication to one of his family, of a poem in itself so noble, and so interesting to the glory of the Christian arms. Nor was Cynthio himself less desirous of so distinguished an honour; and, as he knew the wavering disposition of Tasso, he took every method of having the work perfected, and published as quickly as possible. For this purpose, he engaged in his service Angelo Ingegneri, a Venetian man of letters, who, as has been mentioned, was the editor of the first complete edition of the *Jerusalem Delivered*. This gentleman was considered as extremely fit to assist in the publication of this second *Jerusalem;* he was well acquainted with the scrawl of the poet, of whom he was the friend and ardent admirer; and, besides, was possessed of an excellent taste in literature.* Thus he not only assisted Tasso in the transcription of his work, but in giving, perhaps, his opinion on the relative merit of different readings. Had this not been the case, it is probable that the *Conquest of Jerusalem* would have been a posthumous work; as, though nobody was ever more fond of composition than Tasso, no one seems to have been more averse to transcrip-

* Ingegneri is the author of a tragedy, entitled *Tomiri*, of which an account may be found in Mr Walker's *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, p. 140. "Oppressed, (says this critic,) with an heavy weight of moral declamation, the dialogue is often languid, but some of the odes abound in true poetic fire. Ingegneri, (continues he,) was a man of profound learning, and a successful translator. His translation of the first book of Ovid's *Art of Love* is still read with pleasure; but his literary character derives its celebrity from his *Discorso della Poesia Rappresentativa.*"

tion, and to that species of bustle which precedes publication,

From a letter of Tasso, dated the twenty-second of July, 1592, and addressed to the Grand Duke Ferdinand, it would seem, that he had once had some intention of choosing that prince as his Mæcenas, as he makes him a kind of apology, that this was not to be the case. "I have given," says he, "as it were, the last perfection, and the last additions to my poem; and, after twenty-six years of labour and misfortunes, it would have yielded me much satisfaction to have paid my court, by this work, to your most serene highness. This has not been possible; but if your highness may, without any dissatisfaction on this account, grant me a privilege, I supplicate that favour." It farther appears, from the epistles of Tasso, that, though provided by Cynthio with elegant apartments, and entertained at his own table, the poet had hitherto received no certain establishment. This, perhaps, might be done as a check upon Tasso, and from ignorance that his mind was at least as much influenced by gratitude as by hope. "I am neither, (writes he, in a letter to Manso, of the twelfth of November, 1592,) I am neither excluded from the palace, nor from the expectation of favour from his Holiness. But the hopes of this court are uncertain; the occasions slow; the impediments great; and my merits of no consideration." He appears, however, upon the whole, to have been satisfied with his prospects, and he was particularly pleased with the magnificence of his apartments in the Vatican. "The chamber," says he, "which I inhabit, and

CHAP. XXII.

A. D. 1593. Aet. 49.

the beauty and delightfulness of the place, diminishes my desire of once more beholding Naples before I die. When this event happens, may it please the Lord, that I may be supported by his grace."

It was in this noble and dignified residence, that Torquato prepared for publication, his second, and, as he thought, most sublime *Jerusalem*. That this was his opinion, appears from several of his letters, and especially from one to the celebrated Monsig. Panigarola, dated the tenth of April, 1593. "I am, in an exceeding degree, affectionate," writes he, "to my new, or reformed poem, as to a new birth of my intellect. From the old one I am now estranged, as a father from children who are either rebellious, or whom he suspects to have been begotten in adultery. But this has sprung from my mind, like Minerva from that of Jove, and I consider it as my very life and soul."* It is asserted by Manso, that Tasso, dissatisfied with this second *Jerusalem*, determined to write a third, intermediate, as it were, between the former two. Of the truth of this assertion, Serassi has a suspicion, as there is no hint, (he says,) of such a circumstance in the poet's letters; as these, on the contrary, testify his approbation of, and complacency in, his new work; and as he wrote two long discourses with a design to unfold its beauties.† This poem had been ready for the press on the

The Gerusalemme Conquistata.

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* Vol. X. p. 73.

† In an epistle, however, from Mount Olivet, IX. p. 372, our poet speaks of writing an epic, entitled *Tancredi Normando;* and Crescimbeni tells us, tom. ii. p. 446, that, upon

tenth of May, 1593, and its publication seems to have been delayed only till Cynthio was promoted to the purple.* That event took place in the month of September, and in the December following the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* was given to the world.†

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the cover of a copy of Tasso's *Sette Giornate*, which he had seen, there was marked, by the hand of that poet himself, *Il Boemondo di M. Torquato Tasso al Santiss. e Beatiss. et Ecumenico P. e Pastore Universale della chiesa di Cristo Papa Clemente VIII.* This seems to have been the title of a new poem planned by Tasso, but of which, if any part ever existed, not a single vestige remains. See also vol. X. p. 74.

In the following letter, alluded to by Milton, Torquato gives a catalogue of those subjects which he considered as most susceptible of the epic form. It is addressed to Count Ferrante Tassone, and is without date; but must have been written before the poet began the reformation of the *Jerusalem Delivered.* Io ho scritto questa mattina a V. S. che Io desidero di far due Poemi a mio gusto: e sebben per elezione non cambierei il soggeto, ch'una volta presi, nondimeno per soddisfar il Signor Prencipe gli do l'elezione di tutti questi soggetti, i quali mi pajono sovra gli altri atti a ricever la forma Eroica.

Espedizion di Goffredo, e degli altri principi contra gl' Infedeli, e ritorno. Dove avrò occasione di lodar le famiglie d'Europa che più vorrò.

Espedizion di Belisario contra i Goti.

Di Narsete contra i Goti, e discorro d'un Principe. E in questi avrei grandissima occasione di lodar le cose di Spagna e d'Italia, e di Grecia, e l'origine di casa d'Austria.

Espedizion di Carlo il Magno contra Sansoni.

Espedizion di Carlo contra i Longobardi. In questi troverei l'origine di tutte le famiglie grandi di Germania, di Francia, e d'Italia, e'l ritorno d'un Principe.

E sebben alcuni di questi soggetti sono stati presi, non importa; perchè Io cercherei di trattargli meglio, e a giudicio d'Aristotile. Di V. S. Illust. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 240.

* Vol. X. p. 39.

† The following is the title of this first edition, *Di Gerusalemme Conquistata del Sig. Torquato Tasso, libri XXIV. All' Illustriss. e Reverendiss. Sig. il Signor Cintio Aldobrandini Card. di San Giorgio. In Roma, M,D,XCIII. presso a Guglielmo Facciotti, in 4to.* The poem was, in 1594, printed in 4to, at Pavia, by Viani, and in Milan, by Antonio degli Antoni. Of these two editions, the former is the most correct and beautiful. Besides a table of the beginning of all the stanzas, the Pavia edition contains the arguments of G. Massarengo, in octave rhyme, and three stanzas, containing twenty-four verses, in which he gives a summary of the books of the *Conquistata.* Tasso, at the time of the publication of his first epic, had been offended at its appearance under the title of *Gerusa-*

CHAP. XXII.

A. D. 1593. Aet. 49.

The great fame of the author, and the great expectation of this work, diffused it universally, and made it be read with the utmost avidity. It was even, perhaps, some time before people dared to give their opinion; but, when that happened, it was in favour of the other poem. The *Goffredo* was now well known; its incidents were indelibly imprinted on the memory; and the attempt to alter them was dangerous, as it was vain. Even, had the new poem been equal to its prototype, the former must have prevailed; but it was far from equal. The one resembled Tasso, when he composed it in his youth; it was embellished by love, by beauty, and by strength; the other, like the same poet in his declining years, was languid, joyless, and severe. Reason and judgment might indeed be seen, but ardour and fancy had fled away.

In the *Jerusalem Delivered*, there is a certain romantic charm which is wonderfully pleasing. Never was character, or imagery, or scenery, more beautifully delineated; never did genius lend to love a magic so seductive. In what other poem are we presented with situations so affecting; with incidents so well calculated to make the tear of grief, or of pity flow?—In what other poem are we fascinated with an enchantress so bewitching as Armida? By what other

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lemme Liberata, as appears from the following passage of a letter, (*Opere*, vol. X. p. 278.) Io mi son molto maravigliato, che il mio Poema sia stato stampato col titolo di *Gerusalemme Liberata*, perciocchè stando Io in dubbio qual titolo dovessi eleggere, o questo, o quel di *Ger. Racquistata*, o *Conquistata*, inclinava più tosto ad uno de gli ultimi due; ed ora mi risolvo nel *Conquistata*. This letter is dated 3d October, 1582.

poem are so many sympathies of our nature excited and indulged. Never did poet understand like Tasso the distribution of light and shade; that art by which we are conducted from the din and horrour of war, to the asylum of peace, or amidst the bowers of love. Add to this, a style varying with the subject, but always noble; sometimes solemn as the pealing organ, sometimes softer than the breeze-tuned lyre.

Tasso's preference of his second Jerusalem.

Soon after the publication of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, (of which, not to interrupt the narrative, I shall speak at large in the Appendix,) * Tasso, finding that the greater number preferred his first to his second poem, wrote a *Giudizio*, or *Judgement*, to rectify their notions on this head, and to explain the beauties and learning of his latter work. Of this *Giudizio*, our poet composed two books, the first of which treats of the history and allegory, the second of the fable. To these a third, concerning the style or diction, was to have been added; but this he seems to have been prevented by death, or by the difficulty of the subject, from finishing. The following is the manner, in which Tasso, at the beginning of this *Judgement*, speaks of the relative merit of his first and second poems: "I will not, therefore, compare myself with Ariosto, nor my *Jerusalem* with his *Furioso*, as has been done almost equally by my enemies and friends. But my comparison shall be between myself, now aged and

* Appendix, (No. XXXVI.)

CHAP. XXII.
A. D. 1593. Act. 49.

approaching death, and what I was when young, and, as it were, immature in years; my comparison shall be between my *earthly* and this, which, if I do not deceive myself, approximates more nearly to the idea of the *Heavenly* Jerusalem. In estimating the value of these works, I may be permitted to prefer my ripe to my unripe poetry, and the fatigues of age to the sports of youth. In short, I may affirm, without blushing, of my *Jerusalem*, what Dante says of his Beatrice, glorious and beatified.—"Her beauty now surpast her former charms."

Vincer pareva quì se stessa antica. *

Death of Cardinal Gonzaga.

On the eleventh of January, 1593, Cardinal Scipio Gonzaga had passed to a better life, at the age of fifty years. He had long been a very warm and affectionate friend of Tasso; and, though the cordiality of their attachment seems to have diminished, the poet wept his death, and retained a tender reverence for his memory. † In a letter written on the

† Vol. IV. p. 304. In the third stanza of the first canto of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, Tasso expresses his wish and hope, that the sound of this new trumpet might make that be silent which resounded through Italy. Some, however, have imagined that by this, he meant not his own *Jerusalem*, but the poem of Ariosto.

Il pensier m'inspirate, e i chiari accenti,
Perch'io sia degno del Toscano alloro;
E d'angelico suon canora tromba
Faccia quella tacer, ch'oggi rimbomba.

† *Opere*, vol. X. pp. 8, 13. Ieri (says Tasso, in a postscript of a letter to Constantini, dated 15th January, 1593,) "fui avvisato della morte del Cardinale....Rimasi tutto

thirteenth of February, 1593, and addressed to Constantini, who had a short time before entered into the service of Cardinal Gonzaga as secretary, * Tasso thus expresses himself: "I expect your coming with the most impatient desire, that I may know if the cardinal was put in mind, or remembered me at his death. I wish to embalm the memory of my esteem and observance of that lord, not only in some canzone or sonnet, but in a book on the immortality of the soul, in which I would introduce as speaker that illustrious personage, as Sperone did heretofore with regard to Cardinal Contareno. But I know not if I shall have leisure or opportunity to perform this, as I cannot supply my own desires, how much less that of so many claimants." † This work he never executed; nor does it appear, from any document, that the cardinal remembered him in his will. The next compositions of Tasso, were some stanzas on the tears of the Virgin Mary, and of Jesus Christ our Lord. "The occasion of the first of these (says Serassi) was a marvellous image of our lady by Albert Durer, which was kept by Cardinal Cynthio in his own chamber, with the greatest reve-

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stordito: questa settimana l'ho lacrimata nè posso consolarmi, nè sperar più alcuna soddisfazione in questa città," X. p. 38.

Among the letters of Guarini, there is one of condolence to Don Ferrante Gonzaga, brother of the cardinal, in which the poet expresses the most excessive grief for the death of that ecclesiastic, p. 188.

* Tasso's letter, congratulating him on his appointment, is dated Naples, 20th March, 1592. Our poet seems to have forgiven George Alario, for he writes to Constantini, "Baciate in mio nome il Signor Giorgio, *cupio hominem suaviari.*" *Opere*, vol. X. p. 30.

† Vol. X. p. 38.

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1593. Aet. 49.

rence. It was represented with its hands and eyes in an attitude of such devout contemplation, it seemed to have its eyes so loaded with tears, and its cheeks bedewed with drops so real, that it deceived the sight, and appeared to invite every pious hand to wipe them away." * Meanwhile, Tasso learned that the second part of his *Rhymes*, which he had sent to be printed at Bergamo, was published at Brescia; and the Duchess of Mantua, to whom they were dedicated, sent him, it would seem, a present of some rings. †

Tasso's poem on the creation.

The principal study, however, of Tasso at this period, was his *Sette Giornate*, or *Seven Days of Creation*, a poem written in *versi sciolti*, (corresponding in some degree with our blank verse,) and which demanded not only poetical genius, but a mind amply stored with natural and philosophical learning. In the beginning of 1594, he had already completed the two first days, and had even sketched a consider-

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* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 472. Vol. VI. pp. 368, 370.

† Vol. IX. 204, 205, 433. Tasso, as we have seen, was (at least since his distemper) extremely anxious for testimonies of honour, and at this period was desirous of carrying the golden rose to the Duchess of Mantua, which the pope was accustomed to send to newly married princesses. "In Roma (says the poet, in a letter to Constantini, dated Rome, 10th May, 1593,) non mi può, ne dee trattenere alcun altro disegno, che quel di portare la rosa a Sua Altezza: e son risoluto di chiedere questa grazia a Sua Beatitudine in ogni buona occasione, che mi si appresenti." Vol. X. p. 39. "Tous les Ans (says A. de Houssaye) le 4me Dimanche de Carême le Pape benit une rose d'or, qui est destinée pour la premiere Princesse Souveraine, qui vient à se marier. Et c'est pour cela que ce Dimanche est appellé à Rome *La Domenica della Rosa.*" *Lettres d'Ossat*, tom. I. p. 605, *n.*

A similar instance of Tasso's fondness of show may be found, vol. X. p. 19.

able portion of the other five. Of this poem, which did not receive the last touches of its author, the greater part is stately, and some passages are highly poetical. Such, particularly, seems to me the opening of the work; the description of the unadorned earth in the first *Day;* the episode of the Phœnix in the fifth; and the conclusion of the poem. It appears to me, however, that the creation of the world is a theme which a prudent writer ought not to select as a task on which to exercise his muse. It is a subject which must oppress and subdue the greatest genius, being at once too sublime for conception, too vast for display, and too splendid for decoration. As in philosophy, there are axioms which, on account of their evidence, cannot be proved; so, in poetry, there are topics which, on account of their lustre, cannot be illuminated. No hyperbolical aggregation could render more sublime the expression of Moses, *And God said let there be light, and there was light.* Its conciseness, which is remarkable in the ancient languages, adds exceedingly to the grandeur of the idea; as expressing the speed with which the Almighty fiat was obeyed, and the most beautiful of created substances diffusing itself in a moment over the troubled and benighted chaos. Milton himself has degraded the simple loftiness of the original, and, in attempting to make it pompous, has rendered it less exalted.

> "Let there be Light," said God, and forthwith Light
> Ethereal, first of things, quintessence pure,
> Sprung from the deep, and from her native east,
> To journey through the airy gloom began,

CHAP. XXII.

A. D. 1594.
Aet. 50.

Spher'd in a radiant cloud, for yet the Sun
Was not; she in a cloudy tabernacle
Sojourn'd the while. *

Of a work on the creation, divided into seven books, (in correspondence with the pauses of the Almighty energy,) the materials must be very unequally distributed; as, while in some of the days a vast number of objects crowd upon the poet for enumeration, in others there is a want of subject, and the writer must supply it by philosophical discussion. Nothing, however, can please many, and please long, which does not address itself to the fancy or the heart; and, in general, to poems on physical subjects we sit down without curiosity, and rise without regret. The versifier of philosophical topics is in danger of producing a work neither sufficiently interesting for common readers, nor deep enough for philosophers. The latter will be indignant at the mixture of fiction with the severe and simple truth; while the former, perplexed and weary, will be exclaiming with Voltaire,

Un trait d'Imagination
Vaut cent pages d'Astronomie.

One circumstance, to which the little popularity of this poem of Tasso may be attributed, is that of its being written in *versi sciolti*. In Italy, a dispute similar to that in England has arisen with regard to the relative beauty of

* *Par. Lost*, book VII. *v.* 248.

rhyme and of blank verse; and similar pedantic arguments have been used against the former, from its not having been employed by the ancients. "Perhaps (says Metastasio) the Greeks and Latins did not avail themselves of rhyme, on account of the scarcity of similar terminations in their languages. But neither did they use the telescope, the compass, types, nor many other new, useful, and beautiful inventions, which are now adopted, and applauded amongst every people. The use of rhyme, which had been familiar to all the Orientals, is indeed laborious and difficult; but the art of sculpture in marble is more valuable than that of modelling in wax, precisely because it is more difficult and laborious. The infinite number of rhymers proves that the difficulty does not exceed the ability of such poets as are not deterred by labour. It is most certain, likewise, that from the force of a genius constrained by the compression of rhyme, there issue, and not seldom (as from the percussion of a flint,) those luminous poetical sparks, which, without such violence, would never have been elicited. Besides, between the vigour of the same thought expressed in blank verse and in rhyme, there is the same difference as between the velocity of a stone thrown from the hand, and one hurled from a sling. In addition to these reasons, what can be opposed to the doleful confirmation which many distinguished poems in our language have given of this incontestible truth. Such are the *Italia liberata* of the very learned Trissino, the *Sette giornate del mondo creato* of the immortal Torquato Tasso, and many others; which, full of art,

CHAP. XXII. A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

learning, and merit, and, in spite of the high credit of their authors, are (merely from their want of rhyme) buried in oblivion; unknown to every one; and not read for the most part even by those few literary men who sometimes take notice of them merely for the purpose of a display of erudition."

"Our *Ottava Rima* (continues Metastasio,) may boast of having obtained the universal suffrage of all the learned, and of all the vulgar in the innumerable poems written in this measure, with which the Italian idiom abounds. This is the effect of the sweetness of that seducing chant, which prevents satiety, and deceives the weariness of readers by its periodical regular reposes, which are neither so frequent as to glut by their uniformity, nor so distant as to occasion a loss of the sense of the linked sweetness, nor so unaccommodating as to constrain the writer to interrupt the connected series of his thoughts." *

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* *Estratto*, &c. cap. 24. It is a circumstance in favour of the melody of the octave rhyme, that it has been adopted as the heroic measure, not by the Italians only, but by the Spaniards and Portuguese. It was attempted to be introduced into our language, both by Drayton and Daniel; by the first in his *Barons Wars*, by the other in his *History of the Civil Wars*. "I chose (says Drayton in his preface to the *Barons Wars*,) Ariosto's stanza, of all other the most complete, and best proportioned; consisting of eight, six interwoven, or alternate, and a couplet in base.... This sort of stanza hath in it majesty, perfection, and solidity, resembling the pillar which, in architecture, is called the Tuscan, whose shaft is of six diameters, and base of two."

The genius of neither of these poets, however, was sufficiently powerful to establish it as our heroic rhyme, even though they were aided by the translations of Fairfax, Harrington, &c., who always adopted the stanza of the original poems, which they inter-

CHAPTER XXIII.

Tasso leaves Rome, and visits Naples.—Dialogue on friendship, addressed by him to Manso.—State of his lawsuit.—He writes a Latin poem.—Furnishes the Prince of Venosa with madrigals for his musical compositions.—Desires a reconciliation with the Duke of Ferrara.—Is invited to Rome to be crowned in the Capitol.—His gracious reception from the pope, who bestows on him a pension.—Anecdotes concerning him.—Aggravation of his distempers.—Requests to be carried to the monastery of Sant' Onofrio.—His last letter to Constantini. His death and funeral.—Epitaph.

A. D. 1594—1595.
Aet. 50—51.

CHAP. XXIII. A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

In the preceding chapter, I have had the pleasure of relating, that, though the frail and feverish body of Tasso made little acquisition in strength, his mind was consider-

preted. This want of success in the establishment of the octave rhyme may be attributed to the licence which, first Chaucer, and afterwards Spenser, assumed of moulding the structure of the stanza at will. Chaucer's first considerable poem, the *Court of Love*,

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

ably soothed, and his cares allayed, by the high degree of attention and distinction which he enjoyed. "This holy week," says he, in a letter to a friend, "I have been invited to dinner at the palace, with many of the most noble cardinals of the college. I alone, with a very few prelates, have been honoured in this manner; and the same courtesy I have met with from the princes of this city." * He had a place, whenever he chose, at the table of the two cardinal nephews; and his disposition seems always to have led him to prefer grandeur to ease, and the society of the great to that of the gay. Owing to his infirm state of health, Tasso rarely left his chambers in the Vatican; but he sometimes amused

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as well as his next great work, *Troilus and Cresseide*, are distributed into stanzas of seven lines each; of which the first four lines rhyme alternately; the fifth rhymes to the second and fourth; and the stanza then concludes with a couplet. "The stanza of seven lines," says Mr Godwin, (*Life of Chaucer*, vol. I. p. 375, 8vo.) "which Chaucer uses in many considerable works, he is supposed to have been the first to introduce into the English language. It obtained afterwards the name of *Rythm Royal*, was the favourite measure of a long succession of English poets, and is particularly dear to all genuine lovers of English poetry, as having been employed by our admirable Spenser, in his two exquisite hymns of Love and Beauty. Perhaps (adds Mr Godwin,) the circle of English poetry does not afford a more grateful harmony, particularly as applied to compositions of the length of those last mentioned."

Shakespeare, in his *Rape of Lucrece*, adopted this stanza of seven lines. His *Venus and Adonis* is written in another stanza, very common at that period, consisting of six verses, of which the first four are alternate, and closing with a couplet. Spenser not only added a line to the octave, but made some other changes. There being thus no fixed standard, every English poet thought himself at liberty to adopt a stanza according to his fancy or convenience. In general, however, the heroic verses of those times approximate, more or less, to the octave measure, all of them rhyming alternately, and concluding with a couplet.

* Vol. IX. p. 236.

himself by going to hear the lectures of the professors, in the college *della Sapienza*. Among these was his old opponent Francis Patrizio, who had formerly, under the pretence of defending Ariosto, made an attack on the *Jerusalem*.* This person was now professor of Platonic philosophy at Rome; and Tasso condescended sometimes to attend his lectures, and to converse in the circle of studious youth, upon various topics of philosophy and literature. Amongst other learned persons, who at this period earnestly sought his notice, was Antonio Decio da Horte, a celebrated civilian, who, in 1592, had published a tragedy [*Arcipanda*,] which, for a long time, procured its author a very high reputation.†

In March, 1594, Tasso felt an aggravation of his disorders, and continued during the whole spring in a very feeble condition.‡ In a letter to Constantini, of the seventh of May, he tells his friend that he had not recovered his health, and that now even his physicians gave him very little hope. Finding every remedy to fail, he resolved to pass the summer at Naples, which, for a considerable time, he had been very desirous to revisit. He hoped some benefit from the baths and change of air; and, besides, was anxious to come

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* Vol. III. 147, 161, 173.

† Of this tragedy, an analysis of considerable length may be found in the *Historical Memoir on Italian Tragedy*, p. 111. The tragedy is upon the whole too bombastic, and full of blood; but a scene of much pathos and beauty is extracted from the work by Mr Walker.

‡ Vol. X. p. 42.

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

Tasso leaves Rome, and visits Naples.

to some accommodation about his lawsuit, even should it be disadvantageous. The pope and his nephews granted him permission to depart; and he arrived at Naples on the third of June this year.* In this city, the poet took up his residence in the monastery of San Severino. Tasso seems to have been fond of living in monasteries; whether owing to his serious frame of mind, his love of quiet, or the excellent wines which the good fathers are said to have possessed. In the monastery, he was speedily visited by Manso, Marquis of Villa, who was ever one of the most ardent and officious of his friends. The reception given to Tasso by this nobleman was the more cordial, as he had lately received from the poet, a most distinguished proof of his regard. This was a dialogue on friendship, in which Manso was represented as the principal speaker, and which was inscribed with his name.† This little work had been begun by Tasso soon after his last departure from Naples, had been finished at Rome, and was thence sent to the marquis, on the ninth of March, 1593. No compliment could

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* Vol. X. p. 43.

† Te pridem, magno felix concordia Tasso
Junxit, et aeternis inscripsit nomina chartis.
Milton, *Mansus.*
Thee, Tasso once did best of friends proclaim,
And stamp'd his deathless pages with thy name!

This dialogue is to be found, *Opere del Tasso*, vol. VII. p. 472.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

His Dialogue on Friendship, in compliment to Manso.

be higher than this; for, as in dialogues, those persons were always introduced as speakers on the arts, or virtues, by which they were distinguished, Tasso here immortalizes Manso for the kindness and benevolence of his nature; and for those various and rare qualities, which are necessary to the production and duration of a genuine friendship.

When I had written this last passage, I took up the works of Milton, and read with sensibility his poem of *Mansus*. I reflected how amiable he must have been, who has been celebrated by one immortal poet, as the most friendly of mankind; and whose equal is wished for by another with such enthusiasm. The following sentence of Serassi, while it depressed in some degree the elevation of my ideas, showed by what little attentions attachment is fostered in the mind, and that this is effected not by heroic services, or sacrifices, but by minute kindnesses, often trifling in the detail, but not frivolous in the amount. 'At this first meeting,' says the biographer, 'Manso could scarcely cease redoubling his thanks [to Tasso for his dialogue,] and as it seemed to him, that he was not very well furnished in the article of linen, he suddenly made a good quantity of this be provided by the ladies of his house; an attention which was not less agreeable to Tasso, than seasonable. Among the many letters (continues he,) which I possess, written by our poet to the Marquis of Villa, is the following billet, in which he thanks him for this most genteel present:—" Your lordship always increases my obligations, nor do I know how to repay them; I am contented, however, to be your debtor,

CHAP. XXIII.
A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

and I thank you that you are willing that I should be obliged to you. I have received the gift of the linens, which arrived at a most seasonable time; and I thank the ladies, your mother, and consort."* Milton might thus have said of Manso in a literal as well as figurative sense:

O mihi, si mea sors talem concedat amicum!
Phœbaeos *decorasse* viros, qui tam bene norit.

Tasso's lawsuit.

Prior to the arrival of Tasso at Naples, his cause had been introduced into the courts, but with much frigidity and protraction; whether from the poet's poverty, or a fear of offending his adversary the Prince of Avellino. His arrival gave a little briskness to the process; and on the fourteenth of July, 1594, and on several days subsequent, many witnesses were examined, who confirmed not only his descent from Porzia de' Rossi, but his right to the inheritance of his uncle Scipio de' Rossi, who had died intestate. The rights of Tasso could not be more strong nor evident; but, from his want of money, his sickness, which threatened a speedy dissolution, and the power of his opponent, he was forced to be contented with a meagre adjustment, which, owing to the absence of the Prince of Avellino from Naples, took place only two months before the poet's death. Thus it availed him nothing to have got letters of recommendation to the viceroy from the Dukes of Tuscany, Mantua, and Urbino. He had even procured a letter from the King of

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 477.

Spain, which he had consigned to the care of a monk, whom Serassi (who is by no means parsimonious of praise, but, like Homer, distributes epithets on all occasions with open hand,) calls a celebrated divine, *celebre Teologo*. But this celebrated personage had either lost or sold it.

Writes a Latin poem.

In the recovery of his health, Tasso was not much more fortunate than with regard to his property. Still indefatigable however in study, he at this time finished his *Dialogue on Impresas*, *, and a Latin elegy, *Ad Juventutis Neapolitanae Principes*. In his youth, he had, as we have seen, exercised himself somewhat in Latin poetry, and he had lately resumed this exercise, by writing some hexameters on the exaltation of Clement VIII. The few Latin poems of Tasso which remain, have perhaps all the merit that it is probable, the conventional language in which they are written can possess. If we can scarcely write a few lines in a foreign language without a solecism; if we would laugh at a Mandarin who should attempt a long poem in English; it seems almost equally difficult for a modern to compose in Latin or in Greek. While these were living languages, poetry in them was difficult; but, since they have ceased to be spoken, what swarms of Latin poets have arisen in every nation!—bards who cannot write six lines of poetry in their native

* Vol. VII. p. 36. There is a discourse explaining the nature and laws of impresas, in the works of Drummond of Hawthornden. The most beautiful which he mentions is one in the *Rinaldo*, of which I have already taken notice. "Torquato Tasso (says he) in his *Rinaldo*, maketh mention of a knight, who had a rock placed in the waves, with the word *Rompe ch'il percote.*"

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

tongue. The minute shades of signification, the dignity or meanness of words, their fitness for prose or verse, their propriety; these can only be known where the language is vernacular. From the difference of ideas and manners, too, the person who should compose in Greek or Latin must either compose a cento from the writings of the ancients, or run a continual risk of writing barbarously. Bentley is considered, by the commentators of the classics, as perhaps the most distinguished critic who has hitherto appeared, yet his failure in English criticism is notorious. Surely, however, he knew his own language as well as Greek or Latin; and was as well qualified to be the editor of Milton as of Homer. But, in the one case, detection is easy, in the other almost impracticable; and that seems sage and subtile which may be really futile. Certainly, there are many passages in the works of Buchanan, Polignac, and Vida, with which a modern may and must be pleased; but in the same way the English poem of a Mandarin might appear very admirable to his brethren in China. *

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* Every one has heard of the English inscriptions at d'Ermenonville, of which one (if I rightly recollect,) was as follows:

This plain stone
To William Shenstone;
In his poems natural
He describes scenes rural.

And another,

Shower makes 'em enter under clift of the grove,
Thunder they hear no more, but sweet love.

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

Although, on account of his infirm state of health, Tasso confined himself in a great measure to the monastery, and was visited there by his friends, he sometimes went abroad to repay their courtesy. In the house of Don Matteo di Capua, Prince of Conca, he saw sometimes his young secretary Marino, who already gave great promise of future eminence in poetry. * He also visited, at times, Don Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, (the Venusium of the ancients, and birth place of Horace,) with whom he had, two years before, formed an intimacy. This nobleman was a distinguished master of harmony; and, as he wished to employ his talents in adorning some Madrigals with music, he had applied to Tasso, during his former residence in Naples, to compose a few for this purpose. The poet furnished him with a great number, nine of which were afterwards printed in his estimable work, *Sei libri di Madrigali a cinque voci*, printed in folio at Genoa, in the year 1613, and about twenty-six others still remain unpublished. † By these, and other

Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa.

These, no doubt, seemed excellent in France, as the verses of Vincent Bourne do in England. I question, if Horace or Virgil could be recalled to life, if they would be so much amused with any thing as with the works of their illustrious imitators.

* Of this poet I intended to have given some account, but this volume has swelled so much that I must abandon the project. Perhaps, indeed, of a writer of such consequence as Marino, it is better to say nothing than to say little.

† "The work of the Prince of Venosa," says Serassi, "which, in the opinion of the intelligent, is one of the most beautiful of its kind, was published with this title, *Partitura delli sei Libri de' Madrigali a cinque voci dell' Illustriss. ed Eccellentiss. Prencipe di Venosa D. Carlo Gesualdo, Fatica di Simone Molinaro Maestro di Cappella nel Duomo di*

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

attentions, Tasso became so great a favourite, that the prince wished to conduct him to Ferrara, where he intended going

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Genova. In Genova appresso Giuseppe Pavoni, MDCXIII. in fol. The nine of which I shall subjoin the first verses are the compositions of Tasso, though without his name. *Bell' Angioletta dalle vaghe piume,* p. 35. *Caro amoroso neo,* p. 38. *Felice Primavera,* p. 30. *Gelo ha Madonna in seno,* p. 9. *Mentre mia stella miri,* p. 27. *Non è questa la mano,* p. 58. *Se così dolce è il duolo,* p. 29. *Se da sì nobil mano,* p. 19. *Tirsi morir volea,* p. 60. Having from curiosity, (continues Serassi,) made one of them be executed in a select company of Dilettanti, it was universally agreed, that it was impossible that harmony could be more pleasing, or counterpoint more ingenious, and better regulated." p. 480.

The name of Carlo Gesualdo was for some time interesting in Scotland, owing to a notion that he had borrowed from our James I. the Scottish melodies, and introduced them among his countrymen. This was founded on a passage of Alexander Tassoni, who, in the tenth book of his *Pensieri Diversi,* discoursing of ancient and modern music, and the effects produced by some modern compositions, thus expresses himself: "Noi ancora possiamo connumerar tra nostri Iacopo Re di Scozia, che non pur cose sacre compose in canto, ma trova da se stesso una nuova musica, lamentevole e mesta, differente da tutte l'altre. Nel che poi è stato imitato da Carlo Gesualdo Principe di Venosa che in questa nostra età ha illustrata anch'egli la Musica con nuove mirabili invenzioni." Cap. 23. This passage was accidentally observed by Patrick Lord Elibank, and is quoted with much exultation by Mr Tytler and Lord Kames.

"We may reckon," says Tassoni, "amongst us moderns, James King of Scotland, who not only composed many sacred pieces of vocal music, but was himself the inventor of a new kind of music, plaintive and melancholy, different from all others; in which he has been imitated afterwards by Carlo Gesualdo, Prince of Venosa, who, in our age, has improved music by new and admirable inventions."

The compositions of the Prince of Venosa were examined by Dr Burney, who states his opinion of them in the following words: "I was utterly unable to discover the least similitude or imitation of Caledonian airs in any one of them; which, so far from Scots melodies, seem to contain no melodies at all; nor, when scored, can we discover the least regularity of design, phraseology, rhythm; or, indeed, any thing remarkable in these madrigals, except unprincipled modulation, and the perpetual embarrassments and inexperience of an amateur in the arrangement and filling up of the parts." The doctor concludes, that the meaning of the passage of Tassoni is, that the Italian was an *inventor like,* not an *imitator of,* the Scottish prince. *Hist. of Music,* vol. III. p. 219.

this year, to marry the sister of Don Cæsar of Este, afterwards Duke of Modena. He hoped to reconcile the poet with his old patron the Duke of Ferrara, an event for which Tasso seems to have been solicitous. That prince, however, was implacable; since, to his former causes of complaint, were added the dedication of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* to another patron, and the suppression in this work of his own praises, and of those of the house of Este. The new poem was still struggling with the old one for supremacy; and at any rate, it discovered, or seemed to discover, an alienation of esteem. Nothing can be more awkward than a retractation of praises once bestowed; and the few who have it in their power to confer perpetuity, ought to be peculiarly cautious, as it is impossible for them to destroy the altar at which they have sacrificed. A few months before his death, Tasso wrote to Alphonso a letter, wherein his former attachment seems to have revived, and in which, he regrets that he had ever left his service. The general selfishness and indifference of mankind have, in the progress of time, a wonderful effect in correcting sensibility, and producing toleration; and conduct, which, at an early period of life, had filled us with indignation, will, when recollected, and tried by the common standard, appear blameless, and perhaps benevo-

Tasso writes to the Duke of Ferrara.

The Prince of Venosa died in 1614. He is highly celebrated as a composer of vocal music by Blancanus, Mersennus, Kircher, and by almost all the writers of those times. See Hawkins's *Hist. of Music*, vol. III. p. 212.

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

lent. Besides, at the close of life, the irascible passions generally lose their influence, and both religion and nature invite us to be reconciled. "If the time fled (writes Tasso to Alphonso,) could again return, there is nothing I would chuse more earnestly, than to have served perpetually your most serene highness. But, since it is impossible to correct the past, which is long, I shall, in that which remains, which is a very short space, guard with more anxiety against the displeasure of your highness than of any other here. This, indeed, has been for many years my purpose, although much impeded and ill accomplished. Once more I intreat compassion, and I most devoutly beseech God to grant me his pardon, and that of your most serene highness. So God Almighty long preserve and render you happy. From Rome, the 10th of December, 1594. *

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* Tasso had, on a former occasion, written a very affectionate letter to Alphonso, during an illness of that prince, X. p. 338; but these epistles, it is probable, the duke considered as slight expiations of the grievous offence stated in the text. In his *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, our bard had removed altogether Rinaldo, the principal champion of his former poem, and supposed ancestor of the house of Este. In his stead, he had substituted a Riccardo, born at Naples. Alphonso is mentioned only in a single octave of the altered poem, canto XX. 108, and much warmer praise is bestowed on Don Cæsar, canto XX. 144, with whom the Duke of Ferrara was disgusted, both on account of his marriage, and because he had been left heir of the Cardinal Lewis, Alphonso's brother.

Paul Beni, who was at Rome while Tasso was employed on the reformation of his poem, tells us, in his commentary on the *Jerusalem Delivered*, p. 23, that the poet, in his *rifacciamento*, was not wholly at liberty to follow his inclination. "Io," says he, "che in Roma vidi benissimo l'occasione della *Conquistata*, et andai osservando, etiando con vederne in penna buona parte i suoi progressi, e lo stato dell' Autore ancor' egro et infermo, siche e per queste cagioni e per altre hebbi piena contezza di tal mutazione, darei

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

Tasso had now resided at Naples more than four months, (and, except in the affair of the lawsuit, with considerable satisfaction,) when he received letters from Cardinal Cynthio, entreating him to return to Rome, before the winter season. To these the poet replied, that it was highly inconvenient for him to depart so soon, both on account of his process, and as he had begun to print his enlarged *Discourses of the Heroic Poem*, and his *Dialogue on Impresas*. Upon this, the cardinal, partly to hasten his return, partly to satisfy his own gratitude, requested of the pope and Roman senate, to grant the poet a triumph; and that he might be crowned with laurel in the capitol. From a letter of Tasso, to Cardinal Gonzaga, dated the tenth of June, 1590, and unnoticed by any of his biographers, it appears that he had at that time wished for and expected this ceremony. "I think," says he, "of my coronation, which, since I seek no crown, but one of laurel, ought to confer more happiness than those of princes, nor indeed can I be soothed in any other mode. In the solemnity I shall have need of an ambling nag, which I have deliberated to

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di ciò pieno e largo ragguaglio, e farei chiaro come ne con mente in tutto sana, ne con intera elettione, cangiò il suo Poema, ma non è espediente trattenersi in tal discorso."

It may be proper to remark, in speaking of Alphonso for the last time, that he died on the 27th of October, 1597. By his extravagant magnificence, he had aggravated the burdens of his subjects to such a degree, that he left his successor, Don Cæsar, equally poor in treasure, and in the affections of the Ferrarese for the house of Este. From these circumstances, and the hatred also of Alphonso's sisters to the new duke, Ferrara fell an easy prey to Clement VIII. and Don Cæsar (a good but feeble prince,) was limited to the sovereignty of Modena, from which he and his successors took their title.

CHAP. XXIII. A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

ask in a present from the Cardinal Montalto, or from the pope himself. But, since I am not sure of a reply, I pray your lordship to beseech, in my name, the Duchess of Mantua, that she would deign to confer on me a gift suitable to my deliberation; I mean, that she would present me with that white horse which carried me to Guastalla." * What grounds Tasso had at that period for expecting a coronation, I have not discovered; nor do I find the circumstance hinted but once in any other of his epistles. †

Is promised a triumph.

The request of Cynthio was readily granted by his uncle, and by the senate; and that cardinal, giving information of it to the poet, entreated him to hasten his arrival, that every thing might be prepared for this ceremony, which he wished to be one of the most solemn that Rome had seen for many ages. Tasso, as we are told by Manso, ‡ received the intelligence with great indifference; and, had it not been a fear of displeasing his Mæcenas, would have rejected it altogether. His soul, employed more and more in the contemplation of eternity, must have now looked with contempt on the idle pageantry of such a spectacle. He must have reflected, that if the laurel had been honoured by Petrarch, it had been, or might be, debased by others; and, as far as fame was concerned, he must have been sensible that the respect which he had met with from the robber, that the wondering gaze of the vulgar as he passed, were better securi-

* Vol. IX. p. 428. † *Ibid*, p. 429. ‡ *Vita del Tasso*, p. 225.

ties for his glory, than the splendid mummery of a coronation in the capitol.

Urged, however, by his friends, and not willing to seem ungrateful to his patron the cardinal, he wrote to this ecclesiastic, informing him that he would be in Rome at the beginning of November. Seeing no end to his process, he wished to come to some agreement, but as the other party still procrastinated on various pretences, he was forced to leave Naples without any accommodation. His two works, *On Heroic Poetry*, and *Impresas*, were still in the press; but he left the care of publishing them to the Abbè Polverino. Prior to his departure from Naples, Tasso visited the Marquis of Villa, at his Castle *della Pianca*; and, having informed him of the invitation which he had received, and of the coronation designed him, that nobleman counselled him by all means to accept this honour, and not to delay his journey to Rome. As to the journey, replied the poet, that may indeed take place, but with regard to the coronation, it comes too late. The marquis adds, that Tasso embraced him with great tenderness, as if he had foreseen that it should be for the last time, and took a sorrowful leave. After quitting Manso, he repaired to Monte Cassino, for the purpose of visiting the body of St Benedict, whom he ever had considered as a peculiar patron. In this monastery, Tasso lingered several days, employed in religious exercises, and thence departed to Rome. At the gates of the city, he was met, (as we are told by Manso,) by the families of the two cardinal nephews, and by a number of prelates and

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1594. Aet. 50.

courtiers. Possibly this may be exaggerated, but what is certain is, that he was received by the two cardinal nephews with the utmost cordiality; the more so, perhaps, as he had, at Naples, given them a new proof of his esteem, by dedicating to the one of them, his *Discourses on Heroic Poetry*, and to the other, his *Dialogue on Impresas*.

Arrives at Rome.

The arrival of Tasso at Rome took place about the tenth of November, 1594. On the day following, he was admitted to an audience of his Holiness, who received him benignantly; and, after many praises of his worth and genius, said, "We have destined you the crown of laurel, that from you it may receive as much honour as in times past it has conferred on others." The poet humbly kissed the feet of the pontiff, and rendered him thanks.* Cardinal Cynthio would have immediately begun the preparations for that splendid pageantry, but the winter of this year was extremely rainy, accompanied with violent storms. It seemed best,

* A few days after his arrival, (Nov. 16.) Tasso wrote a letter to Constantini, which is strongly expressive of his love of fame. "Io, (says he,) che in un mio dialogo ho difeso l'onor delle lettere da Socrate, e da Platone, o se pur ragionavano da scherzo, da Tamo Re degli Egizj, ora sarei costretto di mutare opinione, se amassi più questa brevissima vita, che mi avanza, che una lunga memoria di vita non oziosa: e se l'ozio, e la quiete si dee desiderare, piaccia a Dio che Io ne possa godere nell'altra, o in questa, come se Io fossi in Paradiso: ma questo non è possibile. In vano è il desiderio, il conosco, il confesso, me ne pento; ma torno a peccare in questa sola vanità. Se non volete ajutarmi a santificare, non mi negate ajuto al vaneggiare. Desidero, che in Vinegia sian ristampate tutte le mie Opere, o innanzi, o dopo la mia morte; dico le nuove, e le riformate, o con danari o senza. Se non potrò aver questo favore in vita depositerò i danari, che avanzeranno alla sepoltura, purchè dicano di volermi compiacere." Vol. X. p. 44.

therefore, to delay the spectacle till the arrival of spring, when a good day might be expected to render it pompous, and pleasing. This delay was by no means disagreeable to Tasso, as he was now little anxious for an honour, (which had procured to Petrarch only envy and vexation,* and) to which his internal sentiment of the near approach of death, gave a character of frivolity and folly. In a letter to the Grand Duke, dated the twentieth of December, the poet informs that prince of the intended coronation, but speaks of it in a cool and indifferent manner; and when he was shown by Cataneo, a sonnet composed by Hercules Tasso on this subject, he answered only with this verse of Seneca,

> Magnifica verba, Mors prope admota excutit.
> Approaching Death, at splendid phrases scoffs.

Notwithstanding the very deplorable state of health in which Tasso had returned to Rome, he still attended to his studies, and especially to his poem on the creation. Ingegneri, who was always with him, took care to collect, with the utmost diligence, every verse which the poet dictated, or wrote upon different scraps of paper; an attention, to which we are indebted for the preservation of the work.† Mean-

* Haec Laurea, says Petrarch, speaking of his coronation, hoc mihi præstitit, ut noscerer, ac vexarer; and again, Haec mihi Laurea Scientiae nihil, plurimum vero quaesivit Invidiae. *Epist. Senil.* lib. 17. ep. 2.

† Tasso, at his death, bequeathed all his writings to Cardinal Cynthio, and, among the rest, his poem on the creation, on which he had not bestowed his last corrections. Proud

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

while, Tasso received from Naples some copies of the writings which he had left there to be published, and he had the satisfaction of presenting one of each to his cardinal protectors, to whom they were dedicated. He was afflicted, however, that a defence of Virgil had not been subjoined, which, before his departure from Naples, he had left for this purpose with the Abbé Polverino. His object, in that small work, had been to repel some of the objections of Sperone, who both asserted, and wrote, that the *Eneid* is deformed with innumerable faults. It is assuredly a loss both to poetry and criticism, that this performance of Tasso is not extant; as, from the peculiar study he had made of the writings of Virgil, and his power of appreciating them, it was undoubtedly a work of distinguished merit.

In January, 1595, Tasso, though extremely unwell, wrote some verses in praise of Don Ferrante Gonzaga, lord of Guastalla, who had sent him a complimentary letter on his

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of the possession of this treasure, the cardinal resolved to retain it in uncommunicated enjoyment. Ingegneri, however, had possessed the foresight to take a copy; and, after the death of Tasso, having left the service of Cynthio, he determined to publish it in Venice. A bargain had been concluded with Ciotti, when notice of the circumstance having reached the cardinal, he wrote with great passion to the Nuntio, by whose influence a stop was put to the impression. The two first books, however, were published, as these had been printed previous to the check. After the death of Clement VIII., when Cynthio ceased to have influence, Ingegneri, under the patronage of a nephew of Paul V. published the whole poem at Viterbo, with the following title, *Le Sette Giornate del Mondo Creato del Sig. Torquato Tasso, All' Illustrissimo Signore il Sig. Gio. Battista Vittorio Nepote di N. S. In Viterbo appresso Girolamo Discepolo*, 1607, *in* 8.

*Gerusalemme Conquistata.** This generous nobleman was himself no mean poet; and, besides a number of verses, had composed a pastoral fable, entitled *Enone*, which, though much admired by those who saw it in manuscript, has never been published. From the letters of our poet at this period, it appears that his indispositions were continually increasing; and in one of the tenth of February, he thus writes to a friend: "I cannot deliver myself from my infirmity, and I live with little hope of life."† Thus he could not enjoy the good fortune which had begun to dawn on him,—his Holiness having lately granted him an yearly pension of two hundred scudi, and at the same time afforded him hopes of farther provision. This circumstance we learn from Tasso himself, and from the following letter of Monsig. de Nores to John Vincenzo Pinelli, first published by Serassi, and containing some agreeable information concerning the poet.‡

Anecdotes of Tasso.

"I send your lordship two sonnets of our Tasso, in the one of which he celebrates the anniversary of the coronation of the Pope, our lord; in the other he lauds him, and recommends himself, as he is wont, to his notice. ‖ His Holiness has courteously received them, and has greatly remu-

* Vol. X. p. 44.

† Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 490. Vol. X. p. 45.

‡ Serassi, *Vita del Tasso*, p. 491.

‖ These sonnets are to be found, vol. VI. p. 235, and begin, the first *Ecco l'alba*, and the other, *Mentre fulmina*, &c.

CHAP. XXIII.
A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

nerated the author; having caused a bull to be expedited for granting him two hundred scudi of pension in Italy, which is more than he ever received for the *Jerusalem Delivered.* The joy which this gave the poet can hardly be expressed. The deed was carried to him by the Datary Monsig. Paolini, who, having stopped to dine with the cardinal, Tasso insisted upon serving him, by giving him the towel, when he washed his hands, though that prelate and the cardinal rejected this honour, and all of us wished to take the napkin from him. My lord the Datary then said, and I think with good reason, that he wished no memorial after death, but the honour he had received that day from Tasso. This action was the more remarkable, as, in his disposition, the poet is rather haughty; ill fitted for courtly meanness; and remote from every species of adulation. By his deportment he often makes me recollect a saying of Sig. Ansaldo Cebà, that he believed he could know the disposition and inward propensities of a person, merely by seeing his verses. You know how the demeanour of Tasso is grave and sustained, and far from every sort of lowness: such is he in his speech, his gait, his countenance, his every gesture. He knows his own value, and in all his conduct shews that sort of honest haughtiness, which is inseparable from merit. Not long ago, I beseeched him candidly, to say which of our poets he thought deserved the first place; he replied, 'In my judgement the second is due to Ariosto.' And the first, rejoined I?... He smiled, and turned from me, wishing it, I be-

lieve, to be understood, that the first was reserved for himself. In this second *Jerusalem*, or *Jerusalem re-acquired*, as he calls it, he says something of himself; and though modestly, nevertheles he compares himself with, and prefers himself to, Ariosto. The verses are,

E' d'angelico suon canora tromba
Faccia quella tacer, ch'oggi rimbomba.*

Discoursing one day, in the anti-chamber, of the poem of Dante, to which Tasso is most partial, the father Biondo, a celebrated preacher, confessor of the cardinal, conversed along with us; as, by some accident, he could not gain immediate admission. That father said, that Dante deserved blame, because he had spoken of himself with too much parade. He added, that he had seen a Dante with notes by Muretus, and that upon this verse,

Sì ch'io fui sesto tra cotanto senno.†

Muretus had written on the margin, "Were you, in the devil's name?" Upon this Tasso got into a passion, and said, that Muretus was a pedant; and that it was a fine thing for a

* The more general opinion is, that in these verses, Tasso alludes not to the *Orlando Furioso*, but to his own first *Jerusalem*.

† Thus among sages, I was deem'd the sixth.

CHAP. XXIII.
A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

fellow like him to pronounce on such matters.* He added, that a poet is something divine; and that the Greeks named him by an attribute of Deity, as if they meant to infer that nothing in the world deserves the name of creator, but God and the poet. It is reasonable, therefore, continued he, that he should know his own value, and reverence himself; and he quoted a passage of the *Lysias* of Plato, from which it appeared, that this philosopher, instead of blaming a poet who sounds his own praises, exhorts him not to undervalue himself. I searched for the place afterwards, and met with it almost at the beginning of the dialogue. I found also, in the margin, this note of my father: "According to this notion, Lodovico Ariosto is to be accounted a bad poet, who says in the beginning—" If from her who has almost rendered me deranged."

Se da colei, che tal quasi m'ha fatto.†

A few days after this, Tasso having, as he often does, favoured me with a visit, I shewed him this note, with which he was much delighted, and having taken the pen, wrote

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* Our poet, notwithstanding this sally, had a high opinion of Muretus; and, in a sonnet on the death of this writer, warmly celebrates his elegance and eloquence. *Italia del suo puro*, &c. Vol. VI. p. 223.

† *Orlando Furioso*, canto I. stanza 2. The father of Monsig. de Nores was the celebrated Jason de Nores, for an account of whom, see Tiraboschi, *Storia*, &c. tom. VII. P. III. p. 279.

under it, *Divinely*. This honour will make me value the book as highly as Monsig. Paolini, that of having the towel served to him by Tasso, when he washed his hands. All these fragments I have tacked together, recollecting the satisfaction which you shewed at a letter that I wrote you about a year ago, on the subject of this great poet." From Rome, 15th March, 1595.

Settlement of his lawsuit.

Almost at the same time that Tasso obtained the pension at Rome, of which mention is made in the above letter, he received intelligence from Naples, that an agreement had been entered into with the Prince of Avellino, who, in consideration of our poet's stopping the process, offered him an annuity of two hundred ducats, and a considerable sum in hand. This was in March, 1595, and it now seemed that fortune was resolved to smile upon Torquato. He was favoured by the pontiff and his court; was furnished with honourable means of easy subsistence; and was about to receive an honour which had never, except on Petrarch, two ages and a half before, been conferred in a manner equally merited and splendid. "It would appear, however," says his devout biographer, "that, to the goodness, piety, and long suffering of Tasso, other than terrestrial rewards were destined by the Almighty; and another kind of diadem than one of fading and useless laurel." Scarcely had the month of April approached, a time when, both on account of the beauty of the season, and in imitation, perhaps, of the triumph of Petrarch, the coronation of Tasso was to take place, when he felt, to an insupportable degree,

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

an aggravation of his disorders.* Such was his oppression both of mind and body, that he considered his case as desperate, and that few days of his mortal life remained. He requested, therefore, the cardinal, that he would permit him to retire into the monastery of S. Onofrio, that, from the salubrity of its situation, he might either recover his health; or, if that were not the case, have his soul, by the assistance of the good fathers who inhabited there, prepared for its departure. The sympathizing cardinal caused his chariot to be prepared for Tasso, and sent with him a gentleman to recommend him to the prior, and two servants, who were carefully to assist him. It happened, says Manso,† that, the morning on which this took place, there fell a most violent rain, accompanied with a most impetuous storm; so that the fathers perceiving the chariot of Cardinal Cynthio ascending at such a period, were full of anxiety and expectation. The prior, therefore, and many others, went forth to the gate, when Tasso descended emaciated and wan, and

Sickens, and retires to the monastery of S. Onofrio.

* The coronation of Petrarch happened on the thirteenth of April, 1341, as we learn from one of his letters to Barbato da Sulmona. See Tomasini *Petrarcha Redivivus*, p. 46. second edition.

† *Vita del Tasso*, p. 229. The whole of the circumstances concerning the death of Tasso are related by Manso, who had an opportunity of learning them, both from the correspondence of his friends, and still more minutely from the Religious of St Onofrio themselves, when, in the year of the Jubilee, 1600, he visited Rome with the Viceroy, and at the request of Cardinal Aldobrandino, undertook to write the life of our poet. At that time, Manso was frequently at S. Onofrio, and bestowed on these fathers an original letter of Tasso, and the manuscript of the *Dialogue on Friendship*, entitled *Manso*; both of which are still preserved religiously in the library of that monastery. Serassi, p. 495. Note.

seeing them, said, he was come to die among them. By the prior and brothers he was received with much tenderness and charity; and, as they were neither ignorant of his genius, nor of his fame, they conducted him to a comfortable chamber, and attempted every method to restore and cherish him. Nature, however, was at length exhausted, and Tasso had tried so many medicines, and made so frequent use of them, that they had now lost their effect.* Foreseeing, therefore, the near approach of eternity, he wrote a last farewell to his most faithful and beloved friend Constantini. The following is a translation of this letter, a letter which it is impossible to read without sympathy and regret; sympathy at the misfortunes of this illustrious man, and regret, or rather indignation, at the manner in which he had been treated by his age. "What," says he, "will my Antonio say, when he shall hear of the death of his Tasso; and, in my opinion, the tidings shall not be tardy. The close of life is fast approaching; no remedy can be found to assuage this new distemper which has joined my others; so that, as by a rapid torrent, I am borne away, without any thing to cling to, or oppose its speed. It avails not now to speak of my

Tasso's last letter to Constantini.

* Maurice Cataneo, in a letter on the death of Tasso, says, that the cause of his distemper had been, "the fancy and suspicion that he was continually at the point of death. Influenced, (adds he,) by this suspicion, and imagining that he might preserve himself by his own medical acquirements, he took at one time treacle, at another aloes, then cassia, then rhubarb, or antimony, by which means he burned and consumed his inwards, and finally hastened his own death."

CHAP. XXIII. A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

relentless fortune, nor to complain of the ingratitude of the world, which has gained the victory of conducting me indigent to the tomb, while I fondly hoped, that the glory which (whatever it may think,) this age shall derive from my writings, would not leave me without reward. I have caused myself to be conducted into this monastery of Sant' Onofrio, not only because the air of it is praised by the physicians as better than any in Rome, but also that I may begin at this exalted place, and with the intercourse of these devout fathers, my conversation in heaven. Pray to God for me, and be assured, that as I have always loved and honoured you in the present, so in that more real life which is to come, I shall do every thing with regard to you, which appertains to the most unfeigned and perfect charity. And so to the divine grace I recommend both you and myself. From Rome, in Sant' Onofrio." *

On the tenth of April, Tasso was seized with a violent fever, occasioned perhaps by his having loaded his stomach with some milk, of which kind of aliment he was fond, and from which he had sometimes derived benefit. His life now seemed in imminent danger; and he himself, who, amidst all his disorders, had still borne up; from the first, imagined that his present disease was mortal. He was attended by the best advice in Rome; and the Cardinal Cynthio, who had flattered himself at first, that this was one of the many distempers

* Vol. X. p. 46.

of the poet, from which he would soon recover, often himself visited and consoled him.* Every attention, however, and remedy was in vain; the distemper continually waxed stronger and stronger, and on the seventh day the physicians ceased their attempts to oppose it. At length one of their number,—Cesalpini, physician of the pope, and an old acquaintance of Tasso,—undertook the awful office of informing him that his last hour was at hand. The poet received the warning not only without alarm, but, embracing the physician, thanked him for tidings so agreeable. After which, raising his eyes to heaven, he gave devout and tender thanks to Almighty God, that he had now brought him to a harbour, after so dreadful and tempestuous a course. From this period, he spoke not willingly on terrestrial subjects, nor even of fame after death; but, intent upon the glories of the Heavenly Jerusalem, he prepared, by acts of warmest piety, for his flight to that abode of eternal felicity. Tasso had led (and especially since the beginning of his misfortunes,) a very devout and religious life; so that now he could without difficulty be resigned to

His devout preparation for death.

* That this was the case, we learn from the letter of Cataneo (already mentioned,) on the death of Tasso. "L' Illustris. Sig. Cardinal S. Giorgio, Nipote di Sua Santità, vero e Cristiano Mecenate, usò verso di lui (Tasso) tutti quelli più amorevoli e pietosi offici, che maggiori aspettar si potessero da Principe Sacro e liberale: lo visitava, lo consolava, mandavagli non solo i suoi medici, ma quelli del Papa: mantenevagli assistenti e servitori fedeli e diligenti; facevagli con somma cura provvedere di tutte quelle cose, che immaginar si potessero dover essere profittevoli per la ricuperatione di sua sanità, desiderata ed ambita da tutti."

CHAP. XXIII.
A. D. 1595.
Aet. 51.

the Divine Will. He confessed with great contrition, and, on the morning following, entreated to be carried to the chapel below, for the purpose of receiving the Holy Sacrament. Being lifted back to bed in the arms of the fathers, he was asked by the prior where he wished to be interred. He replied, in the church of the convent, if they would do that honour to his ashes. Being requested to make a will, and to dictate something as an epitaph, he smiled and said, that as to the first, he had very little to leave, and as to the second, a plain stone would be sufficient to cover him. Turning, however, to Gabriel Toritti, his confessor, he entreated him to mark down, that he left the Cardinal Cynthio heir of his writings, and of his little property. To Manso he bequeathed his portrait, which had been painted by the direction of that nobleman; and to the monastery of S. Onofrio, where he then was, and in which he was to be interred, a metal crucifix of singular workmanship, which had been given him by the pope, with many indulgences. During other seven days, and till the fourteenth of his distemper, Tasso lay principally contemplating the crucifix, and engaged in prayer; so abstracted from human, and so intent upon divine objects, that his visitors, who were many, and of the highest quality, were edified, while they were afflicted. His father confessor, who had an opportunity of being acquainted as well with his past conduct as with his present sentiments, testified to some friends, after the death of the poet, that, for many of the latter years of his life, he had been free from the taint of any mortal sin. On the four-

teenth day of his distemper, and the last but one of his life, Tasso, perceiving that his departure was at hand, wished to be again strengthened by the blessed sacrament; and, as from his weakness he was unable to lift himself from his bed, it was brought to his chamber by the prior. Seeing its approach, he exclaimed with a loud voice, *Expectans expectavi Dominum*, and received it with such sentiments of devotion and humility, as affected every beholder. Finally, he requested extreme unction; and thus, being fortified with all the ceremonies prescribed by his religion, he expected his last summons with resignation and with hope.

Meanwhile the Cardinal Cynthio, hearing from the physicians that his friend was at the last extremity, hastened to the Pontiff for the papal benediction. Clement, as we are told in a letter of Cataneo, "groaned and sighed over the fate of such a man, and granted him a plenary indulgence in remission of his sins." This honour, which is granted only to persons of high consideration, was announced by the cardinal himself to Tasso, who received it with gratitude and humility, saying, 'that this was the chariot upon which he hoped to go crowned, not with laurel as a poet into the capitol, but with glory as a saint to heaven.' There, he added, he would, in return for so many benefits, offer his prayers for his Holiness and for the cardinal. Being asked if he had any other request to make, or any injunction to command, he entreated that the cardinal would collect, if possible, all the copies of his works, (and especially of his *Jerusalem Delivered*, the most imperfect of them all,) and would

CHAP. XXIII.
A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

commit them to the flames. He knew, he said, that the copies were many, and far diffused, that the task might be difficult, but was not impossible. I am willing to hope, that it was not a pedantic imitation of Virgil which prompted this desire; it is probable that Tasso now thought that he had pursued with too much avidity the phantom glory; and, in his present frame of mind, some of the passages of his *Jerusalem* would undoubtedly appear to him deserving of reproach. The request of Virgil was reasonable, and might be executed; but who could have recalled above twenty editions, dispersed in every country, from Ireland to Japan. *

Tasso, however, persisted in his request with so much earnestness, that the cardinal, unwilling to embitter his last moments by a direct refusal, gave him such an answer, as led him to think his desire would be complied with. The poet then added, that having, from the benignity of the pope, and Cynthio's kindness, obtained all that he could now wish for in this world, he entreated, that, during the short period of life which still remained, he might be left alone with the crucifix, and with one or two of the fathers to assist him in his devotions. This was done; the cardinal, who could scarcely refrain his tears, took an affectionate farewell, and, on com-

* A copy of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, of the beautiful and correct edition of Osanna (Mantua, 1585, in 4to,) was, in 1585, presented to the Japanese ambassadors, in their passage through Mantua, when they came to Europe to offer their submission to the pope, in the name of their sovereigns.

ing from the chamber, wept bitterly. Nobody was afterwards admitted to Tasso, but his confessor, and a few of the fathers most distinguished for learning and piety. These by turns sung psalms, in which they were occasionally joined by Tasso; and, when his spirit failed, he ceased not to contemplate the image of his Redeemer. Thus the night passed away, and at the eleventh hour of the day following, (which was the twenty-fifth of April, 1595,) feeling the approach of the agony, he closely embraced the crucifix, and uttered these words, *In manus tuas Domine.*—Unable to finish the sentence, he in a few moments expired, closing his course in this, to begin it in a better and more happy world.

Dies.

Torquato Tasso lived fifty-one years, one month, and four days, like, says Serassi, in this to Virgil, who did not pass his fifty-second year.* The body of the poet was habited in a magnificent toga, and his head crowned with laurel. His remains were then borne by the light of torches through the city with great pomp, and a very splendid attendance.† Every one hastened to enjoy the last sight of

His burial.

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 499. A similar remark is made by Mr Mathias, a gentleman to whom Italian literature in this country is exceedingly indebted. "E cosa degna di osservare, (says he, speaking of the death of Tasso,) che Virgilio visse solamente anni 52 ed il nostro Shakespeare compì esattamente anni 52, morto appunto al suo giorno natalizio." Serassi observes that Caferro has erred in assigning a day too much to the life of Tasso, but he himself has made a mistake of ten days, from not recollecting the change made in the calendar in 1582.

† This, we are told by several, and, amongst others, by Cataneo, who was present at the funeral. The cardinal, says he, in the letter, of which a part has been already quoted, "nella morte gli fece fare quelli onori, come se fosse nato del suo sangue, e che

CHAP. XXIII. A. D. 1595. Æt. 51.

the countenance of a man who had done so much honour to his age. The painters crowded round to contemplate his lineaments, and afterwards rivalled each other in the number of portraits which they exposed. The body was then carried back to the monastery, and the evening of that day on which its spirit had departed, was interred with the usual obsequies, in the church of Sant' Onofrio. Many honours were projected by Cynthio in the first warmth of his regret; eulogies, both verse and prose, were composed, funeral orations to be recited in public were prepared, and a magnificent and splendid sepulchre was designed. Distracted, however, by other cares, by domestic disputes, and almost constant indisposition, the cardinal first protracted, and at last wholly abandoned his intentions, a circumstance which excited a general indignation and regret. * About five years after this period, the Marquis of Villa was at

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alle virtù del Tasso si richiedevano; portandosi il corpo suo per Roma con solenne pompa, accompagnato dalla suo Famiglia, e da molti nobili e letterati, correndo ognuno a vederlo, siccome corsero anche i Pittori a ritrarlo; e ora si vede la sua effigie posta da loro a gara in pubblico."

The following is the manner in which Guarini writes concerning the death of Tasso to Signor Albani, who had given him an account of that event: "La morte naturale del Signor Tasso, che sia in cielo, della quale V. S. mi dà parte, s'il nostro affetto non facesse ostacolo alla ragione, à me parebbe più tosto fine della sua morte mondana, ch'avea sembianza di vita, poich' egli è vissuto poco al desiderio nostro, troppo alle sue miserie, e molto alla sua gloria di Poesia.....Certamente quanto noi ci habbiamo a dolere della sua perdita, tanto ci debbiamo pregiare d'haverlo havuto a dì nostri, perche nel vero egli è stato un gran Poeta," p. 177.

* Amongst other bursts of poetical indignation that a tomb was not erected to Tasso, are four *Quadernarii* of the Cavalier Marino, which are frequently prefixed to the *Jeru-*

Rome, and having visited at Sant' Onofrio the grave of his friend, he was desirous to erect over it a tomb at his own expence. This the Cardinal Cynthio would not permit, though solicited for that purpose by different great personages. It was a duty, he said, which he himself would fulfil, so that all that could be obtained by Manso, was that, in the mean time, a marble tablet, with a short inscription, should be placed by the fathers over the ashes of the poet, to mark where they were laid. Of this inscription the following is a copy :—

D. O. M.
TORQVATI TASSI
OSSA
HIC IACENT
HOC NE NESCIVS
ESSES HOSPES
FRES HVIVS ECCL
PP.
MDCI.
OBIIT ANNO M.D.XC.V. *

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salem. Of these the first is the best; and, as it expresses that poet's opinion of Tasso, and is very sonorous, it is here subjoined :—

Così ten' giaci, senza onor di tomba,
In povero terren nudo di marmi,
O Sonator della più chiara tromba,
Che spiegasse giammai sublimi carmi ?

* Manso was more fortunate in having it in his power to honour the dust of Marino with a superb sepulchre at Naples, [formed, however, principally by the contributions of

CHAP. XXIII.

A. D. 1595. Aet. 51.

Eight other years elapsed without any appearance of the cardinal fulfilling his design. Accordingly, in 1608, (three years after the death of Clement VIII. and two before that of his nephew Cynthio,) the Cardinal Boniface Bevilacqua, a Ferrarese, had the honour and happiness of executing this

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the academy of Umoristi,] a circumstance alluded to by Milton in his poem of Mansus. The English poet mentions, in the same composition, that Manso had written a biographical memoir of each of his two friends, Tasso and Marino. Of these, the first only has been given to the world. The following are the verses of Milton;—

Ille itidem moriens tibi soli debita Vates
Ossa, tibi soli, supremaque vota reliquit;
Nec manes pietas tua chara fefellit amici,
Vidimus arridentem operosô ex aere poetam.
Nec satis hoc visum est in utrumque, et nec pia cessant
Officia in tumulo, cupis integros rapere Orco,
Qua potes, atque avidas Parcarum eludere leges:
Amborum genus, et varia sub sorte peractam
Describis vitam, moresque, et dona Minervae;
Æmulus illius Mycalen qui natus ad altam
Rettulit Æolii vitam facundus Homeri.

To thee alone the poet would entrust
His latest vows, to thee alone his dust;
And thou with punctual piety hast paid
In labour'd brass, thy tribute to his shade;
Nor this contented thee, thy zeal would save
Thy bards uninjur'd from the whelming grave,
In more enduring history to live,
An endless life is also thine to give;
And thou hast given it them, and deign'd to teach
The manners, fortunes, lives, and gifts of each;
Rival to him whose pen, to Nature true,
The life of Homer eloquently drew.

COWPER.

pious function. The monument, which is stately and elegant, is still to be seen on the left hand of the entrance into the church of Sant' Onofrio, where, beneath the effigy of the poet, is the following inscription:

TORQVATI. TASSI. POETAE
HEV. QVANTVM. IN. HOC. VNO. NOMINE
CELEBRITATIS. AC. LAVDVM.
OSSA. HVC. TRANSTVLIT. HIC. CONDIDIT
BONIF. CARD. BEVILAQVA
NE. QVI. VOLITAT. VIVVS. PER. ORA. VIRVM
EIVS. RELIQVA. PARVM. SPLENDIDO. LOCO
COLERENTVR. QVAERERENTVR
ADMONVIT. VIRTVTIS. AMOR
ADMONVIT. ADVERSVS. PATRIAE. ALVMNVM
ADVERSVS. PARENTVM. AMICVM. PIETAS
VIX. AN. LI. NAT. MAGNO. FLORENTISS. SAEC. BONO
AN. MDXLIV.
VIVET. HAVT. FALLIMVR. AETERNVM. IN. HOMINVM
MEMORIA. ADMIRATIONE. CVLTV.

CHAPTER XXIV.

Reflections on the general infelicity of the epic poets.—Description of the person of Tasso.—His dress.—Conversation.—Christian virtues and moral qualities.—His defects.—Intellectual character and endowments.—Excellence of his poetical taste.—Reflections on the beauties and defects of the Jerusalem Delivered.—Celebrated authors, by whom that poem has been admired.—Lyrical compositions of Tasso, his canzoni and sonnets.—His prose writings.—Conclusion.

A. D. * * — * *
AET. * — *

CHAP. XXIV.
A. D. * *
Aet. *

We have now, in the course of the preceding pages, traced the steps of Tasso from the cradle to the tomb. Few persons have suffered so much, whether we consider his frail and feverish body, his mental maladies, or the hatred and persecution of unjust and contemptible men. These inhuman tormentors were chiefly candidates for literary fame, whom his glory had eclipsed; for (let us be just to the age of Tasso,) by

most others, by the princes, the nobles, the monks, even by the banditti, he seems to have been treated with attention and respect. Of the epic poets in general, it may be remarked, that their destinies appear to have been far from happy. The wandering life of Homer, and his poverty, are sufficiently proved by the relish with which he speaks in his works of the grossest aliments, and by the circumstance of his always placing eating in the first rank in his classification of enjoyments. The virtue which he most highly celebrates is hospitality; and the few moral reflections which he makes in his poems, relate in general to the wretchedness of humanity. Those of Virgil, likewise, are of a melancholy cast; his early life was spent in struggling with hardships; his health seems to have been extremely delicate, and he died young. Of Milton, much of the existence was spent in "cloud and ever-during dark;" and Camoens, after innumerable misfortunes, closed his career in an hospital. We are apt to lament the misfortunes of genius, but, perhaps, they may be an effect of that species of compensation which runs through all the works of nature. It were too much, (as I have already had occasion to observe,) to expect that to the blessings of genius should be added those of fortune; that to a happy life should follow immortality of fame, and that no languor should succeed the extacies of a creative mind. Great indeed were the sufferings of Tasso; but that man (I have thought) has little of the enthusiasm of talent, who would not prefer his misery, and his glory, to the most delightful situation which mediocrity ever enjoyed.

Infelicity of the Epic Poets.

CHAP. XXIV.
A. D. * *
Aet. *

It now remains that I should describe the person of this poet, and offer some concluding remarks on his moral character, intellectual powers, and diversified compositions.

Description of Tasso's person.

The person of Tasso has been described by Manso, with a detail, which, though somewhat too minute, it would serve little purpose to abridge. "Torquato Tasso," says he, "was a man of stature so lofty, that, among men of large size, he might have been considered as one of the bulkiest and best proportioned. * His complexion had been exceedingly fair, but, first, studies and vigils, and afterwards disasters and infirmities, had made him somewhat pale. The colour of his hair and beard was a medium, between brown and fair; in such a way, however, that the former was somewhat darker than the latter; but that of both was soft, and smooth, and fine. His head was large, and raised both in the forehead, and in the hinder part, which the Greeks call *occiput*; in the middle, however, above each temple, it was rather depressed than round. His forehead was large and square, first rising to the middle, and afterwards inclining to the hair, which latter time had in a great degree removed, and

* Though a tall man, Tasso was not slender, but suitably thick, and strong limbed. In one of his letters, (vol. IX. p. 162.) he says of himself, "Io son grande e grosso, come sapete." Capaccio, at page 281 of his *Illustrium literis Virorum Eulogia*, thus begins that of Tasso: "Quem cernis (quisquis es) procera staturâ virum, luscis oculis, subflavo capillo, tristi fronte, cogitabundum, inter Christianas phalanges arma barbarica phaleratis carminibus tractantem, Hic Torquatus est." &c.

It will seem ludicrous to mention it; but Camöens, though likewise born in a country of which the natives are swarthy, had yellowish hair. "Mediocri staturâ fuit, (says Nicholas Antonio,) et carne plena, capillis usque ad croci colorem flaveseentibus, maximè in juventute. Eminebat ei frons, et medius nasus, cœtera longus, et in fine crassiusculus."

rendered him almost bald. His eye-brows were well arched, dark, scanty, and disjoined. His eyes were large in proportion to his head, round in themselves, but somewhat lengthened in the corners; their pupils were of a moderate size, their colour of a brilliant blue, such as Homer attributes to Pallas; in their gaze and motions, they were grave and staid, and sometimes they were turned upwards, as following the soarings of the mind within, which was generally raised to things celestial. His ears were of a middling size; his cheeks were rather long than round, meagre by nature, and discoloured by indisposition. His nose was large, and inclined towards the mouth, which was also large and leonine; his lips were thin and pale; his teeth white, large, and thickly set; his voice clear and sonorous, and, at the close of sentences, of a sound more grave. Though his tongue was very nimble, his conversation was rather slow than quick, and he was often accustomed to reiterate his last words. He laughed very rarely, and when that happened, gently, without any noise, and somewhat languidly. His chin was square, his beard was thick, and, as I have already mentioned, of a chesnut colour. His neck was well proportioned, his head elevated, his breast and shoulders broad and full, his arms long, free, and sinewy, his hands were very large, but soft and delicate, his fingers such as could easily bend back. His legs and feet were also long, and well proportioned, but more muscular than fleshy; and indeed his whole body was lean, though suitable in thickness to the height of his figure. His whole limbs were so active, that, in exercises of

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

chivalry, he was very expert, and in fencing, riding, or tilting, needed envy no one. All these things, however, he performed with more ability than grace, as the vivacity of his natural, by no means corresponded with that of his animal spirits. For this reason, likewise, in the public orations which he pronounced in different academies, and in the presence of great princes, his sentiments appeared to the audience much more wonderful than the manner in which they were delivered; perhaps, because his mind, collecting, by its continual speculations, the better part of the spirits to the brain, it did not leave a sufficient quantity in the rest of the body to animate and enliven it. Nevertheless, in all his actions, and even when doing nothing, he discovered, to the most careless observer, a manly grace and beauty, especially in his countenance, which was resplendent with such majesty, that it induced every beholder, previous to any knowledge of his merits, to hold him, from his aspect only, in the greatest reverence."*

Such is the portrait of Tasso, as minute as if drawn by a lover of his mistress. Like the lover, also, Manso conceals some of the circumstances in which nature had been less favourable to the object of his admiration. The sight of Tasso was dim and weak, so that he was almost purblind; a circumstance which may have been occasioned by his continual reading both of books, and of his own small, and almost

* *Vita del Tasso*, p. 241. *et seq.*

illegible writing. This near-sightedness is indeed acquired by most literary men in a greater or less degree. * Our poet also stammered somewhat, as I have already mentioned, so that he could not speak with much grace or quickness.

Dress of Tasso.

In his dress this illustrious man was extremely simple. His common habit, even in his youth, was black; without those fantastic ornaments usual in that age. He had generally, likewise, only one suit; but, though his dress was simple, it was far from slovenly. He was fond of white and fine linen, of which he loved to make large provision, and which he wore plain, without lace or broidery. I mention these things merely as I find them, without any plan of building upon them a superstructure of admiration, or examining whether, if the poet had been 'tricked and frounced,' he would have been worthy of less distinction as a man and writer.

Tastes.

As to food, he was extremely temperate, but "loved," says Serassi, "things sweet to the taste, such as candied fruits, cakes, and sweetmeats, and made a plentiful use of sugar even to his sallad." His dislike to any thing bitter approached to horror, so that, notwithstanding his indispositions, he could scarcely be prevailed upon to take any medicine, of which the taste was disagreeable. I am sensible these remarks must seem trivial;

* In a letter to P. Grillo, vol. IX. p. 64, Tasso speaks of the weakness of his sight in the following manner: "Venendo questa sera al Convento d'Ognissanti, ho incontrato il Sig. Duca di Mantoua, e per la mia corta e debil vista non ho potuto pigliar risoluzione a tempo di fargli riverenza."

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

but even the most trifling circumstances connected with great men are interesting, and have perhaps their value; for who can say (for example) whether there be not a close relation between sensation and sentiment, between natural delicacy of organic and intellectual taste? In drinking, Tasso was less temperate than in food, at least this was the case after his distemper, and might probably be produced by that event, and resorted to for the purpose of expelling dejection. He loved, he tells us, such wines as were sweet and piquant.* Above all, says Brusoni, (who, however, is an apocryphal writer,) he was fond of good Malmsey, and was accustomed to say, that Malmsey filled him with poetical inspiration.†

Conversation.

The conversation of Tasso, though no doubt sensible and judicious, does not appear to have been gay or brilliant. His soul was naturally lofty, his conceptions elevated, his look pensive, and his manners dignified; and, upon the whole, he had too large a portion of what Milton calls a 'tragic sadness and gravity.' This might indeed be in some measure attributed to his misfortunes; but, though his *Aminta* discovers wit and liveliness, I am doubtful if he ever possessed much of that mobility of imagination, that facility, that rapidity, that abandonment, and gaiety, which give

* Vol. IX. 450. VII. 371.

† *Gondola a tre Remi*, p. 273. This work was printed at Venice, 1662, in 12mo. Its author, Jerome Brusoni, describes, in a romantic manner, the loves of Tasso and Leonora of Este, and recounts a number of imaginary and slanderous circumstances. It was placed as soon as it appeared in the list of prohibited books.

a charm to social intercourse. Gravity, indeed, was, in the age and country of Tasso, numbered among the virtues, and in the eulogy of any illustrious man, is mentioned as one of his most commendable qualities. Notwithstanding, however, the esteem in which it was held, it is not improbable that some of the ladies of that age were of the opinion of the Marchioness in Goldoni's comedy, who, speaking of our poet, thus contrasts his writings and conversation:

> Vi dirò: dell' Autore ho qualche stima, è vero;
> Ma è troppo melanconico, troppo in volto severo,
> Ne so, come prodotte abbia si dolce rime
> Un uom, che nel vederlo nera mestizia imprime:
> Ammiro il suo talento, gradisco i carmi suoi,
> Ma egual piacer non trovo a conversar con lui. *

Manso has dedicated one of the books of his life of Tasso to a detail of the wise and witty sayings of that poet. It unfortunately happens, however, that of these a considerable part are to be found in the *Apophthegms* of Erasmus, published before Tasso was born. † It was usual indeed for a biographical writer in those times, to pillage Plutarch, or Diogenes Laertius, for good things to put into the mouth of his hero; a practice from which Machiavel could not ab-

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* *Torquato Tasso*, Act. I. sc. 6. In many of Tasso's letters there is great naïveté, owing, perhaps, in part, to his disease.

† Manso seems to have been perfectly aware of the occasional want of orginality in his bon mots; for, after mentioning one, he says, "Questo motto fu da alcuni ad Epitetto attribuito, ma non è maraviglia, che il medesimo pensiero caggia nella mente, e nella lingua di molti: e perciò agevolmente potrà avvenire anche nelle cose ch'appresso soggiungeremo, che molte di quelle che Torquato disse, fossero da altri, e prima e dapoi state dette; ne perciò dovrà chi legge prenderne ammirazione."

CHAP. XXIV.
A. D. * *
Aet. *

stain in his short detail of the life even of an illiterate soldier, Castruccio Castracani. In the ages of pedantry, it is true, it is not improbable, that many of the sayings of the old philosophers might have been repeated as their own by the learned men of the time; and that an Italian or German sage might make his hearers occasionally wise, or merry, with an apophthegm, or jest, of Diogenes or Socrates.

One of the best of the sayings mentioned by Manso, is the following, which has, moreover, an air of authenticity. Some Neapolitan gentlemen investigating, in presence of our poet, which is the most beautiful stanza in his *Jerusalem*, Salvator Pasqualoni, a lawyer, and excellent writer of verses, recited and gave the preference to that which begins in the following manner, and his opinion was confirmed by Tasso;

Giunto alla tomba, ove al suo spirto vivo
Dolorosa prigione il ciel prescrisse. *

One of the company, not overseasoned with salt, resolving to push himself into notice by a sagacious interrogation, demanded which is the most beautiful of the verses of Pet-

* Can. XII. st. 96. Thus Manso, p. 344. Menage, however, in his *Observations upon the Aminta*, p. 318, says that he cannot be induced to believe that the stanza here alluded to is really the most beautiful, "as the last verse is a play upon words, unnatural to a person in the very afflicted situation in which Tancred was. If it were permitted me," continues Menage, "to say what I think, I should prefer to this admirable stanza, that other in canto XX. (st. 51,) which begins *Giace il cavallo.* Indeed, Tasso himself affirmed to the Marquis Frangipane, that this is the most perfect stanza of the *Jerusalem*, a circumstance which I learned from the Count of Fieschi, a relation of that nobleman."

rarch. To this, Tasso, not much delighted with the change of subject from himself to Petrarch, replied, it is the following:

Infinita è la schiera degli Sciocchi. *

One Julius Cortese, a learned Greek, and professor of that language at Naples, complained to Tasso, that he had every where in his poem spoken ill of Greece; saying of it, for instance,

Or se tu se' vil serva, è il tuo servaggoi
(Non ti lagnar) giustizia, e non oltraggio. †

All the virtues, said Julius, issued from Greece.—They did so, replied Tasso, and in such abundance, that there was not one remaining.

Christian virtues and moral qualities.

With regard to the Christian virtues, and moral qualities of Tasso, these were eminent in a very high degree. I have mentioned, that religious principles were early implanted in his soul, and these seldom altogether wither, when they have been planted with care. In the mind of Torquato they met a congenial soil; there they fixed themselves, and there they grew. His devotional habits must have been nurtured by the composition of his immortal work, in which the proces-

* The band of fools is infinite indeed!

† Cant. I. 51. Now if thou be a bond slave vile, become,
No wrong is that, but God's most righteous doom.
FAIRFAX.

CHAP. XXIV. A. D. * * Aet. *

sions, the litanies, and all that regards religion, are represented, (as Voltaire himself remarks,) with uncommon majesty.* In short, it appears from the whole of his writings, and his life, that Torquato was animated with a spirit of the warmest piety, a "spirit of faith, of charity, of hope."

Spirto di fè, di carità, di speme.

That this great poet was fond of pleasure, is evident, not only from his own confession,† but indeed from the whole character of his poetical productions. His soul, however, was sublime, and his taste refined; and to these we may add, (as protectors of his purity,) in youth, the elevation of his passion, and in manhood, his calamities. In fact, the sensibility that appears in his works, seems not to be such as could be felt by a supplied voluptuary; it is the aspiration of a heart, unallured by common objects, after Elysian scenes, and more than mortal beauty.‡ The disposition of Tasso was by nature affectionate and courteous;

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* *Essai sur la Poesie Epique—Art.* Le Tasse.

† Vol. X. p. 386. IX. 245.

‡ Negli atti poi fu così grande la sua continenza, ch'io quantunque non osassi accertare, lui essersi del tutto da carnali congiugnimenti sempre astenuto; nondimeno non potrei affermare di saper cosa in contrario; e pure pochissimi stimo Io, che sieno coloro, che ne possano piu sapere di quel che Io ne so.... Fui da bocca di lui medesimo rassicurato, che dal tempo del suo ritegno in Sant' Anna, ch'avvene negli anni trentacinque della sua vita, e sedici avanti la morte, egli interamente fu casto; degli altri primi non mi favellò mai di modo, ch'io possa alcuna cosa di certo qui raccontare. Manso *Vita del Tasso*, p. 268.

so artless was he, as easily to be deceived, but ever ready to forgive and pardon.* In all his works, I do not recollect a single passage, in which he decries any other writer. The sentiment of gratitude was in him very strong; and such had been his sufferings, that a very small benefit was sufficient to excite it. What was most irksome in his temper was a strange fear he had of being slighted, and a suspicious and mistrustful disposition. This, however, (though partly, perhaps, owing to his poverty, and residence in a ceremonious court,) must be principally attributed to disease; as, with his birth and talents, it was impossible for him reasonably to suppose, that he could ever be despised. That quality which, above all others, gives security against contempt, was possessed by the poet in a sovereign degree. He was courageous almost to excess; and, after a particular display of his prowess at Ferrara, it was a proverb, we are told, in that city, that no one equalled Torquato in the use of the pen and of the sword.

Colla penna, e colla spada,
Nessun val quanto Torquato.

Inattention to economy.

It is to be regretted that this illustrious man was so extremely inattentive to economy, a circumstance which exposed him to many hardships, and (what happened, indeed, to almost every writer in the days of patronage) to some humiliating descents.

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* We have seen, p. 299, his more than forgiveness of George Alario; and, in 1587, Montecatino having presented Tasso with one of his publications, the poet acknowledges it in the kindest manner. Vol. X. p. 46. Other instances might be enumerated.

CHAP. XXIV.
A. D. * *
Aet. *

When a man naturally proud humbles himself, he is the most abject of beings; it is against his nature, and he cannot descend with grace. The letters of Bacon remain an insult to human genius, and a mournful lesson of human weakness; the manners of Rousseau were at times not merely obsequious, but cringing; and it cannot be disguised, that the poverty and mismanagement of Tasso subjected him occasionally to mean solicitation. We have seen, that, at his departure to France, what little he had was in the hands of Jews; and, as I formerly remarked, one is sometimes surprised at seeing in his letters, that, a few days after receiving a considerable present, he is as poor as ever. This seems to have proceeded, not from prodigality, but carelessness, and from an opinion, that attention to worldly concerns is unworthy of a philosopher.

Imprudent frankness.

There was another quality of Tasso, which, in the scenes into which his destiny threw him, must have greatly impeded his fortune, as it not only made him enemies, but delivered him into their hands. This was an uncommon frankness and openness of nature, which, however, if it be not itself a virtue, is their very common attendant. It proceeds, in general, from a heart free from guile, and which, therefore, is at once unsuspicious of others, and unconscious of any thing which it thinks necessary to dissemble; or it may arise from an upright dignity of soul, which sees or hears with abomination, all that is base and wicked, and in which the love of truth is a true passion. There are some persons, too, of a sensibility so powerful, that, whoever happens to be

with them, is at that moment to them the world; their hearts involuntarily open, they are prompted by a strong desire to please, and they thus make confidants of their sentiments, people, whom in reality they regard with indifference. Tasso, likewise, appears to have been variable and irresolute; but this, it is probable, proceeded from his indisposition. Inactivity of body, when the mind is tortured, is unsupportable; and in the fever of the soul, every change of posture is attempted in search of relief.

Intellectual character, and endowments of Tasso.

With regard to the intellectual character and endowments of Tasso, these were in the highest degree exalted and vast. His apprehension was exceedingly quick, since no such specimen as the *Rinaldo*, both of early progress in literature and of genius, is to be found in the history of learning. So tenacious was his memory, that he tells us, in a letter formerly quoted, that, before it was weakened by sickness, he was accustomed very seldom to write, as he could retain at once, three or four hundred stanzas. His principal study, next to poetry and criticism, had been the dialogues of Plato; but I know not that he had ever been a profound Greek scholar, and it is certain, though concealed by his biographers, that he had lost to a considerable degree his facility in that language.* His erudition, however, was very extensive, and, from some of his dialogues, indeed, would appear to have been immense. With the French and Spa-

* Vol. IX. pp. 85, 96, 283. See also *above*, pp. 188, 275.

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

nish, which at that period were considered (with the Italian,) as the only refined languages of Europe, he was well acquainted.* He was deeply skilled in what that age considered as philosophy; and (what was then, and even now, is too rare among literary men,) was not a stranger to the mathematical sciences.

As to the excellence of the poetical taste of Tasso, this appears, in the first place, from his discourses on epic poetry, and from several critical memoirs extant in his works. To me, these discourses, (which were written in the early youth of their author,) seem the most perfect of all literary discussions. They are the blended result of the profoundest judgment, and the most exquisite sensibility; and, with the letters on the subject of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, are of inestimable importance to the student of poetry and criticism. But, above all, the excellence of the taste of Tasso appears from the judicious choice of the subject of his poem, and the admirable conduct it displays throughout. He seems early, as I have more than once remarked, to have been sensible of the advantage which would spring from an union of Gothic splendour and variety, with classic regularity. While the romantic writers were huddling together adventures without connexion, and without contrast; without distribution of light and shade, of bustle and repose; while they were placing the simple by the grotesque, and the lofty by

* Vol. IX. p. 249.

the mean, the followers of the ancients were reproducing only common thoughts, and faded pictures. It was then that this mighty genius conceived, and conceived, as we have seen, in early youth, the idea of uniting the Grecian graces of order and regularity, with the Gothic solemn fancies and bewitching incantations. For this purpose, he selected a subject, interesting beyond all others; where ambition might be represented as spiritualized by devotion; where angels and dæmons might be exhibited as naturally interested; where the manners and customs were different on both sides, and on both picturesque; where scenes touching, or sublime, or terrible, might alternately be displayed; and the most specious miracles be mingled with the sweetest pictures of nature.

Principal source of his poetical faults.

It is in this way, that the poetical judgment of Tasso is to be estimated; and not from a few points, and strained conceits, scattered through his poem. These are to be attributed to his familiar acquaintance with the lyric poets of his country, and to his own extensive practice of that species of composition. Accordingly, it will be found that these faulty verses are to be met with only in the discourses of his lovers, in different parts of his *Jerusalem*, love being the principal province of the lyric poetry of Italy. In his pastoral, also, the two most faulty passages are the address of Aminta to the tree, from which he is unbinding Sylvia, (Act III. Scene 1.) and that of Sylvia to the girdle of Aminta, which had broke in the hands of the shepherd, who

CHAP. XXIV.
A. D. * * *
Æt. *

attempted to detain him, when falling from the rock, (Act IV. Scene 2.) Defects of a similar kind exist in the twelfth canto of the *Jerusalem*, where Tancred, at the tomb of Clorinda, laments her death; and in the love conversations of Rinaldo and Armida, in the sixteenth. In these, and a few analogous passages, subtle and artificial reflections are substituted for the true sentiments of nature. No one had felt the passion of love more ardently than Torquato; no one has delineated beauty with so sweet a pencil, or expressed so powerfully the magic of its influence; but in Italy, so much had been written on the subject of love, at the very dawn of its literature, that nothing remained for the later poets but fanciful conceits and elaborate wit. They sat down, not to give vent to the emotions, or sufferings of the heart, but to ransack the memory, and fatigue the fancy, in search of occult qualities, and dissimilar similarities. They seem to have been more anxious to be admired than pitied by their mistresses; as *they*, on the other hand, appear to have been more flattered with exciting respect and awe than desire or love. Tasso did not altogether escape the metaphysical jargon of his country; for the greatest genius cannot wholly surmount the empire of habit and education; and, in a quibbling and punning age, its Miltons and its Shakespeares will be quibblers at times, and punsters. The blemishes, however, in the *Jerusalem* are in no great number, and most of those passages of that poem, which, by Bouhours, and others, have been blamed as conceits, are, in fact, most beautiful

and ingenious thoughts.* True criticism will, perhaps, find at length, that what, in some of the ancients, has been called simplicity, is only mawkish insipidity; and will estimate the productions of genius, not by the chronological table, but by the pleasure which they give.

Of the criticisms which I have met with of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, by far the best, is that of Voltaire, in his Essay on Epic Poetry; a criticism, indeed, compiled in a considerable degree from Terrasson, and other writers; but to which that illustrious poet has given the sanction of his authority. Voltaire himself has derived from the Crusades, the subject of *Zaire*, the most affecting of his tragedies; and never did poet, except perhaps Tasso himself, represent heroism as speaking with sentiments more dignified; or enthusiasm with accents more pathetic, and more true.

Criticism on the Jerusalem Delivered by Voltaire.

"There is, (says this distinguished writer, in speaking of the *Goffredo*,†) there is no monument in Italy, that more deserves the attention of a traveller than the *Jerusalem* of Tasso.... Time, which undermines the reputation of common performances, has only rendered more stable that of this poem. The *Jerusalem Delivered* is now sung in many parts of Italy, as the poems of Homer were in Greece; and Tasso is placed without scruple by the side of Virgil and of

* See Bouhours' *Maniére de bien penser, &c.*, and *Pensées Ingenieuses.*

† *Essai sur la Pöesie Epique—Art.* Le Tasse.

CHAP. XXIV. A. D. * * Aet. *

Homer, in spite of his defects, and the criticisms of Despreaux."

"The *Jerusalem* seems, in some respects, to resemble the *Iliad:* but, if it be an imitation to select in history a subject analogous to the fable of the war of Troy; if Rinaldo be a copy of Achilles, and Godfrey of Agamemnon, I will venture to say that Tasso has far surpassed his model. In his battles, he has as much fire as Homer, with more variety. His heroes, like those of the *Iliad*, have a difference of character; but the characters of Tasso are introduced more skilfully, marked more strongly, and sustained more artfully. In the Grecian poet there is scarcely one which is not inconsistent with itself; in the Italian every character is uniform, and supported to the last."

"Tasso has painted what Homer only sketched; he has perfected the art of varying his tints; of discriminating in the different virtues, vices, and passions, specific differences, which no eye had discerned but his own. Thus the characteristic, both of Godfrey and Aladin, is sagacity; but in Godfrey it is a calm and cautious prudence; in Aladin a restless and cruel policy. Courage is predominant both in Tancred and Argantes; but in Tancred it is a generous contempt of danger; in Argantes a brutal fury. Love, in Armida, is a mixture of coquetry and madness; in Erminia, it is a sweet and pleasing tenderness. There is indeed no figure in the picture which discovers not the hand of a master; even the hermit Peter is finely contrasted with the enchanter Ismeno, and these two personages are assuredly superior to the Cal-

chas and Talthybius of Homer. Rinaldo is indeed imitated from Achilles; but his faults are more excusable, his character is more amiable, and his leisure is better employed. We are dazzled with Achilles, but for Rinaldo we are interested."

"I know not whether Homer has acted rightly in exciting so strongly our sympathy for Priam, the enemy of the Greeks; but it was indeed a master stroke in Tasso to render Aladin odious. Had this not been the case, the reader might have taken part with the Mahometans against the Christians; he might have been led to consider the latter as a band of robbers, who had agreed to issue from the heart of Europe to lay desolate a country to which they had no claim; and to massacre in cold blood a venerable monarch of fourscore years, and a whole innocent people, against whom they had no pretence of complaint."

After a sally against the Crusades, which he represents as equally foolish and barbarous, Voltaire thus proceeds:

"Tasso has, with much judgment, exhibited them in a very different light. In his poem we behold an army of heroes, marching under the conduct of a virtuous chief, to deliver, from the yoke of infidels, a country which had been consecrated by the birth and death of a God. Considered in this view, the subject of the *Jerusalem* is the most noble that can be conceived. Tasso has treated it with all the dignity of which it is worthy; nor is this elevated work less interesting than it is sublime. The action is well conducted, the incidents in general artfully disposed, the adven-

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

tures skilfully introduced, the lights and shades admirably distributed. He transports his reader from the tumults of war, to the sweet solitudes of love; and from scenes of exquisite bliss, he again conducts him to the field of battle. The sensibility which he at first awakens is gradually augmented; he rises gradually above himself, as he proceeds from book to book. His style is almost always clear and elegant; and, when his subject requires elevation, it is astonishing to perceive how he impresses a new character on the softness of the Italian language; how he sublimes it into majesty, and compresses it into strength."*

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* Of this an example may be given in a stanza, which has frequently been quoted, as an instance of imitative harmony. It is the description of the summoning the infernal council, at the beginning of the fourth canto of the *Jerusalem Delivered.*

Chiama gli habitator de l'ombre eterne,
Il rauco suon de la Tartarea tromba:
Treman le spatiose atre caverne,
E l'aer cieco à quel romor rimbomba:
Nè stridendo così da le superne
Regioni del cielo il folgor piomba;
Nè si scossa giamai trema la terra,
Quando i vapori in sen gravida serra.

The dreary trumpet blew a dismal blast,
Which rumbled hoarse, mid lands, and kingdoms under;
Through darkness wide it roar'd, through hollows vast,
And fill'd the deep with dread, and horrid wonder:
Not such the sound, when mortals hear aghast,
Mid groaning Alpine woods, the rattling thunder;
Not such the shock which heaves the lab'ring earth,
When vapours pent within contend for birth.

Stanza 3.

These lines of Tasso are imitated, though with much improvement, from the *Christiad*

"One may find, indeed, in the *Jerusalem*, about two hundred verses, in which the author has indulged himself in puerile *concetti*, and a mere play upon words. These weaknesses, however, were a sort of tribute which his genius paid to the epigrammatic taste of the age in which he lived."

After this very high eulogy, Voltaire points out what he considers as defects in various parts of the poem, a circumstance which, as Mr Hoole remarks, gives his testimony in behalf of Tasso, so far as it goes, new force. Of these criticisms, the greater part seem to be made, according to the practice of the author, merely *pour egayer les choses*, and the few that are serious, (if indeed any one but the objection to the episode of Olindo and Sophronia is so,) are not more just. With regard to this episode, if it had no other merit than throwing odium on the character of Aladin, a circumstance which Voltaire considers as of such mighty conse-

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of Vida, to which poem, he has in the whole passage concerning the council, been considerably indebted. In the work of Vida, the sound is also an echo to the sense:

—— ecce igitur dedit ingens buccina signum,
Quo subitò intonuit caecis domus alta cavernis
Undique opaca, ingens; antra intonuere profunda,
Atque procul gravido tremefacta est corpore Tellus.

The first who seems to have described an infernal council, with any degree of dignity, is Claudian, in his first book of the Rape of Proserpine. He was imitated and improved on by Vida; who was imitated and improved on by Tasso, as the latter has been by Milton.

CHAP. XXIV

A. D. * * Aet. *

quence, it would be far from useless.* What the French poet objects to, are the enchantments, that is to say, the finest passages of the work of Tasso. Of these objections, the principal have been answered by Mr Hoole, in the preface to his translation of the *Jerusalem Delivered.*

Nobleness of the characters in the Jerusalem.

In our criticisms of the poem of Tasso, we ought not to forget the singular nobleness and dignity of his characters. His Tancred is a chevalier Bayard, refined to the highest degree, by the lofty genius of the poet. When Rinaldo leaves in a rage the Christian army, he does not, as has been remarked by Terrasson, repose, like Achilles, in his tent, and behold with apathy the ruin of his countrymen. He does not pray like him, that no one, whether friend or foe, may escape from slaughter. No—he refuses to be accompanied by the heroes, who wish to follow him, as partakers of his fortunes: he resolves to go to Egypt to oppose its monarch, who was arming against the crusades, and thus, though at a distance, to co-operate with the Christian arms: he determines to explore the head of the Nile, and revolves in his mind the greatest and most unwonted exploits.

Molta intanto è concorsa amica gente,
E seco andarne ogn'un procura, e prega:
Egli tutti ringrazia, e seco prende
Sol duo Scudieri, e su'l cavallo ascende.

* See *above*, vol. I. p. 216.

52.

Parte, e porta un desio d'eterna, ed alma
Gloria, che a nobil core è sferza, e sprone;
A' magnanime imprese intenta hà l'alma,
Ed insolite cose oprar dispone.
Gir fra i nemici: ivi ò cipresso, ò palma
Acquistar per la fede, ond' è campione;
Scorrer l'Egitto, e penetrar fin dove
Fuor d'incognito fonte il Nilo move.*

But, above all, the principal charm of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, is the enchantress Armida, and the adventures and events to which she gives birth. Never did the imagination conceive a woman so bewitching; never did genius array with such seducing charms an ideal being. Her boldness in undertaking the preservation of her faith; her arts in the attempt; these arts yielding to her love for Rinaldo; her ge- Armida.

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* A crowd of friends around the hero throng,
And seek to share his glory, and his fate;
He thanks them all; but only with him takes
Two trusty squires, and slow the camp forsakes.

52.

And, evermore, gay visions of delight
Enrapt, as on he rode, his burning mind;
Atchievements vast, unheard-of deeds of might,
And fall of Paynim empires he design'd:
Alike to him to gain in toilsome fight
The palm or cypress, if with glory join'd:
Egypt he means to waste, and bend his course
To where mysterious Nile conceals its source.

Canto V.

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * * Aet. *

nius, her vivacity, her profound sensibility, affect, in the strongest degree, the fancy and the heart. The enchantresses of other poets; the Alcina of Ariosto, and Duessa of Spenser, are foul and filthy hags; and Tasso seems, first of the romantic poets, to have perceived that there is no witchery so powerful, as natural and virgin grace. In every country, Armida, and the gardens of Armida, are proverbial terms for beauty and delight; and there is no reader of sensibility, who does not adopt, or at least confess the justness of the sentiments which Quinault, in his opera on this subject, puts into the mouth of the enamoured Rinaldo:

Que j'etois insensé de croire
Qu'un vain laurier, donné par la victoire,
De tous les biens fut le plus precieux!
Tout l'eclat dont brille la gloire,
Vaut il un regard de vos yeux?
Est il un bien si charmant, et si rare,
Que celui dont l'Amour veut combler mon espoir? *

Tasso's paintings of the spiritual world.

To an English reader, some of Tasso's paintings of the spiritual world may, perhaps, seem mean, owing to the elevation of our ideas of this kind, by the sublime pictures which have been pourtrayed by the genius of Milton. This, however, can only apply to his description of the Devil, and the infernal scenes; for the angels of Tasso are beautiful as those of Raphael, and have evidently been the principal study of

* Acte 5, Scene 1.

the English poet. What vision of the *Paradise Lost* is more happily conceived, or more exquisitely delineated, than the picture of Gabriel, in the first canto of the *Jerusalem*, or the descent of Michael, in the ninth. Tasso, has indeed, in the description of his Devil, injured the picture, by some disgusting strokes, but it was not his object to exhibit that being as the rival of the Omnipotent. Satan is not, as in the *Paradise Lost*, the principal character of the *Jerusalem*; nor was it the purpose of the poet to depict him as sublime, but horrible. Nevertheless, he has raised the leader of the infernal regions higher than Michael Angelo, or any painter or poet who preceded him, and has described him as towering, terrible, and majestic as Atlas. One of the commentators, indeed, of Tasso, apologises for his attributing majesty to the Devil; nor is it probable, that, if he had conceived an idea of this being similar to that of Milton, that he would have dared to embody it.* In the *Jerusalem Delivered*, however, the speech of Lucifer is equally dignified with any in the *Paradise Lost*; and from it, the English poet has manifestly derived several of those dauntless sentiments and proud resolves, which wake alternately our pity and admiration for the fallen angel.

* Non è fuor di proposito (says Beni, in his *Commentary on the Jerusalem*, p. 511,) avvertir' in questo luogo che non si turba il decoro nel darsi *maestà* à Lucifero, poscia-che nell' istesso tempo si deturpa chiamandola *horrida*. If the revisors of Tasso raised such an outcry about his adoption of the word *Mago*, what would they have said if that poet had made an exalted hero of the Devil?

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

Ah non fia ver; che non sono anco estinti
Gli spirti in noi di quel valor primiero,
Quando di ferro, e d'alte fiamme cinti,
Pugnammo già contra il celeste impero:
Fummo (no'l nego) in quel conflitto vinti;
Pur non mancò virtute al gran pensiero:
Hebbero i più felici allor vittoria;
Rimase a noi d'invitto ardir la gloria.*

Of the enemies of the reputation of Tasso, one of the most formidable has been Boileau, who, though he confesses, in his *Art of Poetry*, that this writer has *de son livre illustré l'Italie*, has a most illiberal verse on the subject in the ninth of his satires. For this line the satyrist has been often reproached by Voltaire, and by other critics of sensibility: but it received, in this country, both notoriety and authority from Addison, whose critical discernment was quite subdued by Bouhours, Boileau, Bossu, and other French writers, the fashionable Aristarchi of those days. My reflections on this subject, I shall subjoin to a passage taken from Bishop Hurd's *Remarks on the Plan and Conduct of the Faerie Queene*, which, though of considerable length, is so connect-

* Oh be nothen the courage fled away,
That courage proud, which in your breasts prevail'd,
When, girt with flames, we rose against the sway
Of Heaven's King, and fierce his hosts assail'd;
I grant, we fell—I grant, oppress'd we lay,
Yet not our virtue, but our fortune fail'd:
To him was giv'n the conquest of the field,
To us, superior minds, that scorn'd to yield.

Canto IV. Stanza 15.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

ed with the topics I am now treating of, and so important, that I should deem myself unpardonable not to give it a place in the Appendix.* Meanwhile, I may remark, that, if Tasso's merit is to be decided by his popularity, his admirers can point out an hundred and sixty editions of the *Jerusalem*, and above forty translations; if it is to be estimated by authority, his glory is equally secure. We have already seen the admiration which Voltaire entertained for the Italian bard, an admiration which appears in a great number of passages in his works. "With regard to the *Iliad*," says he, in his *Essay on Universal History*, "let each reader consult his feelings, and tell us what would be his opinion upon the first reading of this poem, and that of Tasso, without knowing the names of the authors, and the period at which they wrote, but determining only by the pleasure he received from each. Could he avoid giving the preference to Tasso in every respect? Would he not find in the Italian more conduct, interest, variety, exactness, graces, and that tenderness which gives relief to the sublime?—In a few ages hence, I question whether they will even be compared."†

Admiration which many great authors have had for the Jerusalem.

* Appendix, (No. XXXVII.)

† A l'égard de l'Iliade, que chaque lecteur se demande à lui-même ce qu'il penserait s'il lisait pour la première fois ce pöeme et celui du Tasse, en ignorant les noms des auteurs, et les temps où ces ouvrages furent composés, en ne prenant enfin pour juge que son plaisir. Pourrait-il ne pas donner en tout sens la préférence au Tasse? ne trouverait-il pas dans l'Italien plus de conduite, d'interêt, de variété, de justesse, de grâces, et

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

Rousseau, in the most eloquent of his works, shews his high esteem of Tasso, by the frequency with which he names and quotes him;* and the story of our poet seems first to have inspired the citizen of Geneva with the sweet transport of composition. "In an heroic ballet, (says he, in his *Confessions*,†) I proposed three different subjects, in three acts, detached from each other, set to music of a different character, and taking for each subject, the amours of a poet. I entitled this opera, *Les Muses Galantes*. My first act, in music strongly characterised, was Tasso. . . . I tried my skill on it, and applied to it with an ardour, which, for the first time, made me feel the delightful sensation produced by the creative power of composition. One evening, as I entered the opera, feeling myself strongly incited and overpowered by my ideas, I returned to my apartment, locked the door, and, after having close drawn all the curtains, that every ray of light might be excluded, I went to bed, abandoning myself to this musical and poetical *oestrum*, and in seven or eight hours, rapidly composed the greater part of an act. I can truly say, that my love for the princess of Ferrara, (for I was Tasso for the moment,) and my noble and lofty sentiments with respect to her unjust brother, procured me a night an hun-

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de ce molesse qui relève le sublime ? Encore quelques siècles, et on n'en fera peut-être pas de comparaison. *Chap.* CXXI.

* *La Nouvelle Heloise*, tom. 1. Let. 12, 23, 25, 46, 52, 57, &c.

† Vol. III. p. 40.

dred times more delicious than—'it is possible for me to describe.' In the morning, but a very little of what I had done remained in my head, but this little, almost effaced by sleep and lassitude, still sufficiently evinced the energy of the piece of which it was the scattered remains."

Nor have examples of the interest which Tasso excites in minds of genius and sensibility been less, but more remarkable, among the writers of this island. To Spenser he has furnished the most beautiful passages of his poem—to Milton his fame was an incentive, and his work a model. Dryden, in the preface to his *Virgil*, declares the *Jerusalem Delivered* to be the next heroic poem to the *Iliad* and *Æneid*. Gray, in a letter to Mr West, tells him that he is reading Tasso, "whom (says he,) I hold in great admiration;" of which, indeed, he gave a most unequivocal proof, by leaving among his papers a translation of part of the fourth canto of the *Jerusalem*, which Mr Mason tells us has great merit. In short, it may be affirmed, that, in proportion as a person is himself possessed of poetical genius, of a vivid imagination, and a tender heart, in that proportion shall Tasso be admired. With what transport he could affect Collins, even in the rugged and unequal translation of Fairfax, he has left us a testimony in the following beautiful lines:

In scenes like these, which daring to depart
From sober truth, are still to nature true,
And call forth fresh delight to Fancy's view,
Th' heroic Muse employ'd her Tasso's art,

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

How have I trembled, when at Tancred's stroke,
Its gushing blood the gaping Cypress pour'd!
When each live plant with mortal accents spoke,
And the wild blast upheav'd the vanish'd sword!
How have I sat, when pip'd the pensive wind,
To hear his harp by British Fairfax strung:
Prevailing poet! whose undoubting mind
Believ'd the magic wonders which he sung!
Hence at each sound imagination glows!
Hence at each picture vivid life starts here!
Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows,
Melting it flows, pure, murmuring, strong, and clear,
And fills the impassion'd heart, and wins the harmonious ear.

Of Tasso's Lyric Poetry.

It now remains to speak of the lyric compositions of Tasso,—his canzoni and his sonnets. The former of these

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* *Ode on the Popular Superstitions of the Highlands.* How much Tasso was an object of admiration among his countrymen appears from the vast number of heroic writers, Zinano, Villani, Garopoli, Caraccio, Bracciolini, Cagnoli, &c. who followed his footsteps, or endeavoured to vie with him. (See Serassi *vita del Tasso*, p. 514. I. N. Erythraei *Pinacotheca*, I. 8, 64. II. 27.) This latter writer gives a whimsical instance of admiration for Tasso in his Eulogy of Paulus Guidottus Burghesius, whose genius he highly celebrates. "In eo autem," says he, "excelsum suum animum, ac promerendae aeternae nominis sui famae cupidum, significavit, quod tantum animi habuit ad audaciam, ut immortali, neque omnium eruditorum praeconio satis unquam laudato, Torquati Tassi poemati, aliud a se factum opponere non dubitaverit. Nam quemadmodum ille Ierosolymam, ex hostium Christiani nominis servitute ereptam, et in libertatem vindicatam cecinit, ita etiam hic eandem funditus dirutam, quoquomodo potuit, explicavit; et quod incredibile dictu videatur, totidem plane versibus, eodem metro rhythmoque conservato." *Pinacotheca*, I. 68. A Spaniard likewise (the Conde de la Roca, ambassador at Venice,) published *El Fernando o Sevilla Restaurada, Poema Heroico escrito con los versos de la Gerusalemme Liberata dell' insigne Torquato Tasso; offrecido a la Magestad de Filippo IV. el Grande Monarca de Espana, Emperador de las Indias, por D. Ivan Antonio de Vera, y Figueroa, Conde de la Roca, Comendador de la Barra etc. Embaxador estraordinario en Savoja, y ordinario en Venecia. En Milan*, 1632. *Por Henrico Estefano, in* 4. The figures of Bernardo Castelli, which had been executed for the *Jerusalem*, served also to embellish this poem. Such whimsical, and, I believe, unexampled instances of admiration, could only be prompted by the prodigious popularity of Tasso's work.

are extremely admired by his countrymen, especially on account of the wonderful grandeur and dignity of their style. Tasso was as solicitous about the mechanism of his language as the sentiments and images; and many minute and subtle remarks on the means of attaining nobleness and harmony in lyric composition, are to be found in his *Cavalletta, or Dialogue on Tuscan Poetry.** I must confess, notwithstanding, that to me a great proportion of the canzoni of Tasso, and a still larger portion of his sonnets, appear to have little merit, but that of style. I know not whether that be true of men of powerful genius in general, which Johnson (how justly I shall not examine,) said of Milton, that he could cut a Colossus from a rock, but could not carve a head upon a cherry stone. It must be remembered, however, that when Tasso fails in lyric composition, it would be unfair to attribute it to the character of his genius. In his best days he was principally occupied with his *Jerusalem*, and by far the greater part of his canzoni and sonnets were written after his mental alienation. Nor was this all; but his life was often rendered a burthen to him by writing at the request, or rather, in his situation, at the command of others, when his brain was heated with labour, and his body oppressed with sickness. He was continually, unhappy man! compelled to compose; at one time requesting; at another thanking; now deprecating; now congratulating; now sympathising.

* *Oper.* vol. VI. p. 462.

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

Thus his lyric productions were chiefly written in sickness; hastily; involuntarily; on partial and trivial subjects; any one of which circumstances is sufficient to hinder excellence.*

But though, from these causes, some of the canzoni, and many of the sonnets of Tasso, have not that merit which the genius of their author would lead us to expect, he far excells Ariosto, Guarini, and, with one or two exceptions, all the Italian poets in this walk of composition. It happens, unfortunately for the lyric bards of Italy, that one of the fa-

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* "Non posso (says Tasso, in a letter to Cardinal Alessandrino, vol. IX. p. 116,) se non far brevi composizioni, e con qualche mio compiacimento, perchè tra l'infermità e la fatica del poetare à voglia altrui, m'è venuto quasi in odio la vita." And in a letter from St Anne's to Sig. Curzio Ardizio, (vol. IX. p. 159,) he says, "Signor Curzio, son molti anni ch'io patisco di umor malinconico, e di frenesia: e così frenetico ho fatto varie sorti di poesia per compiacere agli amici, e per servire a'padroni: ora sarebbe tempo, ch'io pensassi a ricuperare la sanità, ed a vivere in ozio qualch' anno, o mese almeno; e questo non mi è conceduto dal comune consentimento del mondo." He seems to have thought it incumbent to reply in kind to every person who wrote him a sonnet, (vol. X. p. 286) and thus complains to his friend Constantini: "Io non mi posso difendere dall' indiscrezione, e dall' importunità degli uomini, li quali non cessano di darmi nojosissimo travaglio con diverse dimande, quasi che io non abbia altro che fare, che saziar l'appetito or di questo, or di quello." See Vol. IX. pp. 506, 21, 338, 422. X. 278, 289. In all these, and in other passages, Tasso complains that many of his lyrical pieces were printed without correction, and incorrectly, which had been forced from him, as it were, by compulsion, when he was sick and exhausted. On the same subject are the following beautiful verses of a sonnet to a friend:

Oh potess'io, come nel lieto Aprile
Sovente avvien, che d'una in altra fronda,
All'un canoro augel l'altro risponda,
Cantare a prova a lei con alto stile!
Ma secca or parte dell' usato ingegno
La chiara vena: e se i pensier distillo,
Son le lagrime preste, e tardi i versi. VI. p. 214.

thers of their poetry composed so much in this style, and in a manner, and on a theme so excellent, as to render competition hopeless. Petrarch, as is most justly remarked by Drummond of Hawthornden, is by far the best and most exquisite lyric and amatory poet; he seems to have exhausted the subject of that species of love, the objects of which are less the pleasures of sense, than the affections of the heart. No author, considering the similarity of his subjects, ever copied himself so little; and in almost every one of his numerous canzoni and sonnets, there are original conceits, sentiments, or images.

A. D. * * Aet. *

Petrarch.

——— videtur
Arsisse hîc Daphnen alter Apollo suam.

Of the numerous sonneteers who followed Petrarch, imitating, not his natural and tender sentiments, but his *sweet bitters, burning ice,* and *frozen fire,* the first, who seems to have endeavoured to strike out a path somewhat new, was the celebrated John Della Casa. This writer determined to sacrifice sweetness to majesty, and endeavoured to introduce, at the hazard of some ruggedness, loftier conceits, nobler images, and a more dignified style, than had yet been adopted, or, if we believe Dante, ought to be adopted in the sonnet. Whether, from the character of his genius, or to segregate himself from the herd of those who followed, or thought they were following, Petrarch, Tasso imitated the example of Casa. * His sonnets, therefore, abound with learning, and

Casa.

* Speaking of lyric poetry in his *Cavaletta,* (vol. VI. p. 488,) Tasso says, "Perciocchè fra tutti questi (Dante, Petrarca, Bembo, B. Tasso,) niuno ricercò più la grandezza del

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

with many philosophical and grave conceits, so that he has thought proper to illustrate many of them with a commentary. "Conceits, however, (as Tasso himself observes, in one of his works,) ought not to be introduced into poetry from the inmost shrines of philosophy and the sciences. For, though they have something sacred and venerable, they have less novelty than difficulty, less majesty than obscurity, and are rather by the public abhorred as enemies, than received with pleasure as strangers and guests. Petrarch (continues he) avoids them wholly; and, in all his most divine compositions, every thing is not only sacred and venerable, but delicate and pleasing. From the Platonists he adopted, not what was abstruse and difficult, but what was easy and agreeable. He introduced the conceits of philosophy with such modesty, temperance, and caution, he clothed them so elegantly, and adorned so gracefully, that they seem

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Signor Giovanni della Casa, quantunque non conseguisse quel grado ch'era dovuto a' suoi meriti singolari; chiunque vorrà scrivere come conviensi a' grandi, a mio parere dovrebbe proporselo per esempio." In this whole dialogue, Tasso highly extolls the sonnets of Casa; and a similar preference appears in a *Lezione* upon one of them read by our poet, in the academy of Ferrara, vol. VI. p. 447. Tasso also greatly admired Tansillo.

It has been asserted by many critics, that Milton's sonnets are formed rather on the model of those of Dante, (whose sublimity, energy, and roughness, they are said to partake of) than those of Petrarch. Tasso, however, in a lecture upon one of Casa's sonnets, enters at some length into a refutation of Dante, who denies that a sonnet ought to have the qualities which Milton, according to these critics, derived from him. "Non sarà forse fuor di proposito," says Tasso, "che si consideri, s'egli è pur lecito che'l sonetto nella forma di parlar altissima si componga, che intorno a ciò non picciol dubbio ci muove l'autorità di Dante.... Ma con pace di Dante sia detto," &c. *Opere*, vol. V. pp. 450, 473, 474.

not strangers, but the children of poetry; not the natives of the Lycæum or Academy, but of Parnassus itself." *

Taste of Tasso in the fine arts.

It does not, I think, appear from the writings of Tasso, that he admired any of the fine arts but poetry, farther than every person of sensibility, who loves nature and beauty, must necessarily do. That this, with the exception of music, was the case with Milton, is believed by Mr Richardson, a fond idolater both of that poet, and of the arts of painting and sculpture. In fact, in the works of neither of these poets do we find those allusions, or observations, which must have occasionally escaped an amateur, who had seen in their best state the productions of Michael Angelo and Raphael. But, though the creations of painting and of sculpture, did not occupy in a supreme, yet in some degree they must have engaged the attention of these distinguished bards; and, if they did not derive, they could not help improving, by their aid, their ideas of angelical grace and of divine beauty. As to music, Tasso tells us, in his *Cavalletta*, that he had very little knowledge of it, *la picciola cognizione, che Io ho della Musica*, and, indeed, poetry seems so completely to have occupied his mind, as to have left him little leisure or inclination to woo the favours of her sister arts.

His prose writings.

With regard to the prose compositions of Tasso, I have already had occasion to remark, that the greater part of them

* Vol. VI. p. 452.

CHAP. XXIV.

A. D. * *
Aet. *

is written in dialogue, abounding with subtilty and Grecian reasonings. It is impossible, however, to read those of his prose writings, which were composed during the youth of the author, without having the highest idea of his philosophical genius; and (though the slumber of so much fancy and sensibility, by the occupation of his mind on topics where these could not have been called into action, would have been a subject for regret,) I cannot help thinking, that, if Tasso had not been the Homer, he might, a few years later, have been the Locke, or Galileo, of his age. My opinion is founded on the wonderful precision and sharpness of outline, if I may say so, which this writer gives to all his notions on the most abstruse and mystical subjects—on the clearness with which he announces, and the order with which he displays them. His productions have that legitimate filiation of ideas, which proves their author to have possessed a mind eminently geometrical, while they shew also that he joined the precision of the analyst to the penetrating subtlety of the metaphysician. In his latter prose writings, indeed, Tasso has, in a considerable degree, the faults common to his age; they abound in conceits, and are turgid, figurative, and pedantic. It has been remarked by Denina, that the prose authors of Italy, in the sixteenth century, never wrote well, except when they were negligent, and that the style of Tasso, in his *Apology*, is better than in his other works, because, being occupied with things, he expressed himself naturally, without seeking superfluous ornaments. Perhaps, of the style, even of Tasso's later prose writings,

the same thing may be said as of those of Milton; that, though bad upon the whole, passages may occasionally be found, superior in beauty to what can be discovered in the whole circle of their native languages.

Conclusion.

I have now finished the story of the life; the toilsome, eventful, and melancholy life, of one of the most distinguished and illustrious of our species. To the poet and the philosopher; to him who pants for fame, and to him by whom it cannot be attained; it may offer instruction, teach humility, or impart consolation. The young poet will here learn, that the most obstinate labour is necessary even to genius; that neither talents nor virtues can, without prudence, secure happiness; and that, in his approach to the palace of renown, innumerable monsters will be sent by Envy to besiege his way. The student of the philosophy of man may, from the life of Tasso, derive illustration or evidence to some of his physiological conclusions; while, if the true philosopher ever could be proud, he may there see the quick transition from madness to inspiration, and, I might almost say, their near alliance. In fine, he who laments his incapacity to attain reputation, may perceive that, like other ardent passions, a violent thirst of glory indemnifies but feebly the torments which it causes: and, if he is unable to reach the summits of fame, he may be satisfied that he neither needs to combat the difficulties of the path, the adversaries who endeavour to hurl him from the steeps, nor the eternal storms which rage upon their head.

Tasso, as we have seen, possessed all those virtues which

CHAP. XXIV. A. D. * * Aet. *

might naturally have been expected from a laborious man, whose greatest pleasure was study, the art which he cultivated his ruling passion, and the glory of excelling in it his sole ambition. Numerous and bitter as were his foes, they seem to have been unable to charge him justly with a single moral stain; and, amidst many sufferings, he was at least exempted from the most bitter of all evils, the anguish of remorse. His name may be added to that of the other worthies, who have found, in the Christian doctrines, a subject of faith and consolation; and in its precepts a rule of practice. The darkness of his fate had a tendency to turn his views beyond this world, as night, which hides the earth, reveals the sky. Uniting, as he did, the exercise of virtue, to the ardour of devotion; the duties due to his Creator and to his fellow men; we may hope, with his Italian biographers, that God, a bountiful remunerator, called him to himself, before his earthly coronation, to adorn him with a more true and incorruptible crown in the Heavenly Jerusalem.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX.

No. XX.—P. 30.

CANZONE TO THE METAURO.

O del grand' Appennino
Figlio picciolo sì, ma glorioso,
E di nome più chiaro assai, che d'onde:
Fugace peregrino,
A queste tue cortesi amiche sponde
Per sicurezza vengo, e per riposo.
L'alta Quercia, che tu bagni e feconde
Con dolcissimi umori, ond' ella spiega
I rami sì ch'i monti, e i mari ingombra,
Mi ricopra coll' ombra:
L'ombra sacra, hospital, ch' altrui non nega
Al suo fresco gentil riposo, e sede,
Entro al più denso mi raccoglia e chiuda;
Sì ch'io celato sia da quella cruda,

No. XX.

E cieca Dea, ch'è cieca, e pur mi vede,
Bench'io da lei m'appiatti in monte, o'n valle
E per solingo calle
Notturno Io mova, e sconosciuto il piede;
E mi saetta sì, che ne' miei mali
Mostra tanti occhi aver, quanto ella ha strali.
Ohimè! dal dì, che pria
Trassi l'aure vitali, e i lumi apersi
In questa luce à me non mai serena,
Fui dell' ingiusta, e ria
Trastullo e segno, e di sua man soffersi
Piaghe, che lunga età risalda à pena.
Sassel la gloriosa alma Sirena
Appresso il cui sepolcro ebbi la cuna;
Così havuto v'avessi ò tomba, ò fossa,
Alla prima percossa.
Me dal sen della madre empia fortuna
Pargoletto divelse; ah! di que' baci,
Ch'ella bagnò di lagrime dolenti,
Con sospir mi rimembra, e degli ardenti
Preghi, che sen portar l'aure fugaci,
Ch'io giunger non dovea più volto à volto
Fra quelle braccia accolto
Con nodi così stretti, e sì tenaci:
Lasso! e seguii con mal sicure piante
Qual Ascanio, o Camilla il padre errante.
In aspro esiglio, e'n dura
Povertà crebbi in quei sì mesti errori,
Intempestivo senso hebbi agli affanni;
Ch'anzi stagion matura
L'acerbità de' casi, e de' dolori
In me rendè l'acerbità de gli anni.
L'egra spogliata sua vecchieza, e i danni
Narrerò tutti. hor che non sono Io tanto
Ricco de' proprii guai, che basti solo
Per materia di duolo?
Dunque altri, ch'io da me dev' esser pianto?
Già scarsi al mio voler sono i sospiri,
E queste due d'umor sì larghe vene
Non agguaglian le lagrime alle pene.

Padre ò buon Padre, che dal Ciel rimiri No. XX.
Egro, e morto ti piansi, e ben tu il sai,
E gemendo scaldai
La tomba, e il letto: hor che negli alti giri
Tu godi, à te si deve honor, non lutto,
A me versato il mio dolor sia tutto * * *.
Manca.

No. XXI.—P. 32.

DISCOURSE OF TASSO TO THE DUKE OF URBINO.

I have hesitated considerably, whether to present the original, or a translation, of the following long letter, or discourse of Tasso, to the Duke of Urbino. As, however, the principal facts which it contains, are introduced into the text, and as those who are acquainted with the Italian language, (whom the life of Tasso will chiefly interest,) may be desirous of perusing the original document, I have determined to adopt it. No. XXI.

" Sebben io non cedo nel desiderio d'onorar V. Alt. ad alcuno di coloro, che per obbligo di particolar servitù, o di vassalaggio le sono sottoposti; discordo nondimeno da tutti o dalla maggior parte d'essi nel modo che si dee tenere per maggiormente onorarla; quando altri o mosso dall'occasione, o sforzato dalla necessità viene a trattar seco d'alcun suo affare, o giustificando, o informando lei, o cercando d'impetrar grazia, o di conseguir giustizia. Perciocchè la maggior parte degli altri, considerando gli stati, e i titoli suoi, e l'antica, e illustre gentilezza del suo sangue, nel quale, a qualunque lato si riguardi, o agli Avi, e a' Bisavi paterni, o materni, risplendono non solo Principi, e Duchi, e Capitani Invittissimi, ma Sommi Pontefici ancora, da' quali il mondo fu governato col cenno: considerando gli altri (dico) la grandezza della sua nobiltà, della sua dignità, della sua potenza, giudicano, che agli orecchi suoi non debba giungere alcuna parola libera; nè agli occhi suoi dimostrarsi alcun atto, o alcun segno d'animo non servile, e che questo sia non solo debito, ma certissimo segno ancora di affezione, e sicuro testimonio d'onore, e di riverenza. Ma io,

No. XXI. come che parimente ammiri questi beni, de' quali la Fortuna ha arrichito V. A. non mi lascio però in guisa dal loro splendore abbagliare, che non conosca, che non sono particolari, e proprj suoi beni, nè i maggiori, che in lei si ritrovino: perchè ci sono altri Principi ancora, e Italiani, e stranieri, ne' quali riluccono, o tutte, o gran parte delle già dette condizioni, e i quali tutti sono onorati co' medesimi segni d'osservanza, o di servitù. Sicchè nulla di singolare, nulla di notabile, nulla di raro è attribuito a V. A. e con niuna nobile, e generosa distinzione dagli altri è separata; del che dovrebbe V. Alt. rammaricarsi, se a questa persona di Principe, che ella sostiene, impostale dalla Fortuna, e dalla Natura, niuna condizione la sua industria avvesse aggiunta, che tra gli altri Principi la rendesse singolare. Ma s'ella per propria virtù s'è sollevata sovra il volgo de Principi (che così si può dir il volgo de' Principi, come già is dice la plebe degli Dei) non dee stimare d'essere onorata da coloro, che la mettono in ischiera fra la moltitudine degli altri. Non siete voi Principe, e Filosofo, che filosofate reggendo, e reggete filosofando? Non è in voi questa mirabile unione di condizione, alla quale si reca, come a propria cagione, la felicità delle città? Non avete voi alla contemplazione delle cose naturali e civili, aggiunta la notizia delle istorie, e l'esperienza dell' azioni politichi, e militari.* Quanti per Dio, ne annovera l'Italia, la Germania, o la Spagna, o la Francia, ch'abbiano come voi, accopiate la potenza colla sapienza? Mi giova anzi col silenzio defraudarvi d'alcuna vostra propria lode, che col piccolo numero de Principati sì fatti, far arrossir il Mondo delle sue vergogne. Dunque parlerò io con esso voi, non come i Persiani, o i Medi parlavano con Astiage, o con Xerse, nè meno come Calistene usava parlare con Alessandro, che nè

* That Tasso was not altogether flattering the Duke of Urbino, with regard to his studious habits, appears from the following passage of one of Cardinal Ossat's letters; and from the same passage we may learn the impolicy of this long epistle of Tasso to that Prince: "Ie ne parlerai point ici du Duc d'Urhin, pour ce qu' encore que le dit Duc ait pour femme une soeur de feu Duc de Ferrare, toutefois pour le divorce qui est si long temps y a entre lui et sa femme, cette alliance a plustost causé diminution qu' acroissement d'amitié et de bonne intelligence entre ces deux Maisons. Et lui, se voyant le dernier de sa race, et qu' aprés lui son Duché revient au Saint Siege, il s'est plus adonné a l'étude, et à la contemplation qu' à l'action, et semble qu'il ne pense plus qu'à parachever sa vie doucement. Tom. I. p. 487.

io sono Calistene, ne voi porgete a' riprensori quella materia, che ne porgeva Alessandro; ma favellerò come con Alessandro non ancora da costumi Barbari contaminato; o pur come Augusto, o Trajano, o Vespasiano desideravano che con essi loro si ragionasse, non da i Filosofi, ma dagli uomini del volgo ezian-do; fra gli uni, e gli altri de' quali io in mezzo collocato (nè so a qual delle due schiere più vicino) nel narrare a V. A. le mie sciagure, e nel chiederle alcun ajuto, e favore, avrò non solo riguardo alla grandezza del suo stato, e al-la bassezza del mio, ma anco a quelle condizioni, che rendono lei tra' grandi eccellente, e me fra' bassi non ordinario. E se fosse mio fine di muover V. A. con preghi compassionevoli a prender la mia protezione, non negherei per-avventura buona parte di quegli errori, de' quali odo farmi reo da un grido, o piuttosto susurro falso di fama. Percciochè non tanto suol nascere la compas-sione sovra gli uomini affatto innocenti, quanto sovra coloro, che per alcuno umano errore sono caduti in infelicità: oltre che parrebbe, che la protezione vostra ivi con vostra maggior soddisfazione s'avrebbe a distendere, ove più trovasse di poter colla sua grazia gli altrui difetti adempire. Ma io sebben credo ch'abbiate animo che non difficilmente dà luogo ad ogni umano e gentil affetto, quali sono lo sdegno, e la misericordia, o s'alcuno ve n'ha somigliante; credo ch'abbiate parimente intelletto capace d'ogni ragione; il quale così se-dendo fra l'altre potenze dell'anima vostra, come voi sedete fra' vostri popoli, ha per fine di conoscere il vero, e di oprar drittamente. Onde meglio, e più a mio prò stimo il persuadervi con alcuna ragione, o lasciar che la conosciuta verità per se stessa vi persuada, che il piegarvi, o l'agitarvi col movimento degli affetti: nè ho tanto riguardo al mio utile, che non l'abbia insieme alla vostra riputazione. E siccome non ci sarrebe il vostro onore, che alcun vostro servo à suo cenno governasse, e disponesse del vostro stato; così non ci sarebbe, se la parte di voi affettuosa, serva della ragione, fusse principal cagione d'alcuna vostra, quantunque per altro lodabile operazione. Dovendo io dunque parlar non solo a voi, ma a quella parte di voi, che solo del vero, e dell' onesto è so-lita d'appagarsi, da una vera narrazione degli accidenti miei, e de' consigli, nel-la quale apparirà molto maggiore l'altrui malignità, che'l mio errore, o pur niun mio errore, e molta altrui malignità, spero di trar ragioni a bastanza per persua-dervi a favorire nella mia protezione non solo Torquato Tasso, già da' primi anni suoi, e vostri, servitor vostro, e di casa vostra; ma gli studj dell'arti, e delle lettere, No. XXI.

No. XXI. l'onestà, il dovere, la ragione delle genti, e insomma la riputazione se non del Principe, almeno del Principato, la quale si macchia, si brutta, si oscura nelle voci, e nell' opinione degli uomini. Dopo la mia fuga di Ferrara, la quale fu altrettanto onesta, quanto necessaria, trascorrendo di luogo in luogo, giunsi finalmente à Sorrento in casa di mia sorella, ove come in sicura stanza, mi fermai alcuni mesi, e di là cominciai a trattar per lettere col Serenis. Sig. Duca di Ferrara, e colle Serenissime sorelle, proccurando d'esser restituito nella grazia del Sig. Duca, colla quale, io credeva, ed era ragionevole, ch'io credessi, non solo di ricuperar ogni mio primo comodo, e ornamento di mondana fortuna; ma di avanzarmi ancor molto, se non nell' útile, almeno nella reputazione. Ma qual se ne fosse la cagione, dal Sig Duca, e dalla Sig. Duchessa vostra moglie, io non impetrai mai risposta. Da Madama Leonora l'ebbi tale, che compresi, che non poteva favorirmi: dagli altri tutti m'era risposto in maniera, che senza speranza di quiete, m'accrescevano la disperazione. Sì ch'io giudicai consiglio non solo necessario, ma generoso, il tornar colà, onde era partito, e la mia vita nelle mani del Duca liberamente rimettere. E dopo varj impedimenti, caduto in pericolosa infermità, mi condussi à Roma, e mi riparai in casa del Masetto, Agente di sua Altezza. E perchè io conosceva il Duca per natural inclinazione dispostissimo alla malignità, e pieno d'una certa ambiziosa alterezza, la quale egli trae dalla nobiltà del sangue, e dalla conoscenza ch'egli ha del suo valore, del quale in molte cose non si dà punto ad intendere il falso, giudicai di far accortamente se in quel modo seco procedessi, che co' grandi, e co' magnanimi si suol procedere. Perciocchè coll' esempio di Tetide, non ram memorando la servitù mia, e i meriti miei (de' quali poteva pur dire alcuna cosa senza menzogna) ma numerando e accrescendo i favori da lui ricevuti, procurava di renderlomi favorevole, così ragionando con altri, come scrivendo a lui medesimo. Oltra che non solo tutti i miei ragionamenti erano ripieni delle sue lodi, ma di quelle in particolare, che ne' paragoni l'altrui depressione, e'l mio proprio biasimo rinchiudevano. Perciocchè sapendo io che nell'animo suo s'erano impressi altamente due altri concetti di me, l'uno di malizia, l'altro di follia; quello non rifiutava, ma con tacita dissimulazione sopportava i morsi dell'altrui maledicenza, e questa liberamente confessava, nè tanto il faceva per viltà d'animo, quanto per soverchio desiderio di renderlomi grazioso: oltre ch'io stimava, che l'essere terzo tra Bruto, e Solone, non fosse

cosa d'esempio vergognoso, sperando massimamente con questa confessione di pazzia aprirmi così larga strada alla benevoglienza del Duca, che non mi mancherebbe col tempo occasione di sgannar S. A. e gli altri, s'alcun altro vi fosse stato, che avesse portato di me così falsa, e immeritevole opinione. Questo desiderio dunque di compiacerlo, accompagnato dalla speranza della sua grazia, tant' oltre mi trasportò, ch'io ad ogni cenno fattomi dal Sig. Cavalier Gualengo, suo Ambasciatore, per significarmi la suà volontà, così prontamente mi muoveva, come altre fiate mi sarei mosso a' suoi espressi comandamenti. E certo, quella buona relazione ch'io possa dar in questo caso, della fede, e della sincerità di quel valoroso gentiluomo, quella medesimo credo ch'ei possa dar della mia risoluta, e intrepida obbedienza; alla quale non ha peravventura alcuna istoria de' Gentili che paragonare, e solo credo, che si possa assomigliare (in quel modo però, che le cose profane possano venir in comparazione colle sacre) all' ubidienza d'Abramo: e non avendo io risguardo alcuno alla salute, e alla vita mia, con disordini di smoderata intemperanza aggravai volontariamente il mio male, in maniera, che poco avev' io d'andare a rimanerne morto: non sò però, s'intemperanza si possa dir quella, negli atti della quale niuna dilettazione riceve il senso del gusto, o del tatto, e i quali non da cupidigia, ma di consiglio sono derivati: che certo, tutto quello ch'io prendeva di soverchio di cibo, o di bevanda, il prendeva con noja, e con sazietà, e a fine oltre la grazia del Duca, ch'era il mio primo obietto, di avezzarmi a sprezzare la sanità, e'l piacere, sovvenendomi, che ad alcuno de'migliori Filosofi è paruto, che la soverchia sanità sia dannosa alla virtù, come quella, che ajuta il corpo ad insignorirsi dell' animo, e farsene tiranno; e che non solo l'uso di alcune nazioni, ch'oggi regnano, o che regnarono, ma gli antichi Greci Legislatori, e i Filosofi, che formarono le Repubbliche, riecevono l'ebriezza in alcuna occasione come giovevole: ricordandomi, che non solo Alcibiade, che fra gli Spartani era esempio di continenza, e di rigore, fra' Traci, e fra gli Asiatici, era delicato, e bevitore; ma che Socrate eziando il più severo maestro de' costumi ch'avesse l'antichità, celebrava lietamente i conviti, e nelle contese del bere superava tutti i Cinciglioni, al qual piuttosto, che ad alcun'altro stimo di potermi in ciò assomigliare; perciocchè mai non è rimasa impedita alcuna operazione del mio intelletto, nè mai fu perciò da me tralasciato alcun' ufficio civile, o alcun debito di cortigiano, se non quando io av- No. XXI.

No. XXI. visava, che fosse come debita, e desiderata la trascuraggine: anzi non meno ben pasciuto, che sobrio, nè meno a mensa, o tra' bicchieri, che nello studio, e fra' libri, era uso di poetare e di filosofare: e credev'io, e lo raccoglieva da molte verisimili conjetture, o piuttosto da molti certissimi argomenti, che al Duca fosse caro questo mio disprezzo della sanità; non solo acciocch'io, che sin a quel tempo era vissuto delicatamente m'avvezzassi alla sofferenza, ma anco, perchè con notabil confidenza emendassi l'errore della prima diffidenza, la quale però quanto fosse ragionevole, voglio, che sia suo, e vostro giudizio; ch'io per me son contento di credere, ciò che dall'uno, e dall altro ne sarà giudicato. Ma presupponendo, che nella prima diffidenza vi fosse alcuna colpa, fu certo pienamente emendata dalla fede, ch'io mostrai in lui ultimamente, perchè confidai in lui, non come si spera negli uomini, ma come si confida in Dio. E poneva la mia vita a tal rischio, che ogni picciolo accidente, che fosse sopravvenuto, avvrebbe potuta torlami di leggiero. E pur mi pareva, che mentre Io era sotto la sua protezione, non avesse in me alcuna ragione ne la morte, nè la fortuna. Acceso dunque di carità di signore più, che mai fosse alcuno d'amor di donna, e divenuto, non me n'accorgendo, quasi idolatra, continuai in Roma, e in Ferrara, ove mi condusse il Sig. Gualengo salvo, benchè stanco, per molti giorni, e mesi, in questa devozione, e in questa fede; e con mille affetti d'affezione, d'osservanza, e di riverenza, e quasi d'adorazione passai tant'oltre, che a me avvenne quello, che si dice: che'l corsiero è tardo per troppo spronare; che col voler la sua benevoglienza troppo intensa verso me, venni a rallentarlo. E siccome questo cattivo effetto nacque da buona cagione, così da altro buon seme fu generato altro cattivo frutto; perchè risapendo il Duca, ch'io di molte cose era stato calunniosamente incolpato, e certificandosi più di giorno in giorno, con esperienza, che in me non era stata nè pazzia, ne malizia, e che v'era più costanza, e più senno, di quel che per l'addietro aveva giudicato, nacque nell' animo suo nobilissimo un pensiero veramente indegno della sua grandezza, o piuttosto vi fu da maligno consigliero infuso e instillato, il quale con falsa immagine di riputazione, il disviò dal suo primo veramente nobile, e onorato proponimento. Vorrei colla medesima verità e simplicità di parole procedere oltre, narrando, e ragionando, ma un improvvisa, non so se rustica o civil vergogna mi sforza ad interrompere alquanto il corso del ragionamento, perciocchè io stimo, che

non meno sia odioso il vanto, che la calunnia, è a me convenuto e forse con- No. XXI.
verrà favellare di me stesso forse più magnificamente di quel, che usi di far l'ippocrita, o'l cortigiano. E conosco che gran vantaggio hanno i miei calunniatori; perciocchè di due cose, l'una piacevole, e l'altra nojosa ad udirsi, essi hanno occupato la dilettevole, e hanno a me lasciata la molesta. Piace ordinariamente a ciascuno d'udir gli altrui biasimi, perchè ne biasimi, paragonando l'uditore se stesso a colui di chi si parla, il più delle volte si conosce superiore di bontà, e di virtù, ed in questa superiorità, tanto caro alla superbia dell' umana natura, grandemente si compiace: ove negli lodi non suole per lo più riconoscere in se stesso alcuna maggioranza. E se avviene, che nell' altrui bocca non risuonino altre lodi che quelle di se stesso, tanto più l'ascolta mal volentieri, quanto che pare che il favellatore voglia a coloro, che l'ascoltano, farsi superiore. Ma certo, che a gran ragione è non solo nojoso, ma stomachevole il ragionamento di colui, che per vanità fuor di proposito lodi se stesso; ma chi vien necessitato a lodarsi, non potendo ribattere la calunnia altramente, e la verità ascosa manifestare, dee esser ascoltato, se non con diletto, almeno con pazienza, e senza sdegno: e tutto l'odio, che porta seco la lode di se stesso, dee esser torto, e riversato su'l capo di colui, che falsamente calunniando è cagione, ch' altri si lodi veramente. Sicchè io non solo chiedo, che maledico nemico mio sia odiato per la sua calunnia, ma anco con istanza addimando, che sia per lo mio vanto mal voluto, se pur è vanto quello, che non si scompagna dalla verità. E tanto più arditamente l'addimando, quanto che sono consapevole a me stesso, che sebben talora, con alcuno intrinseco mio amico, dissi di me quello, ch'io credeva, nondimeno, le parole, e le scritture mie, che dovean pubblicarsi, fur sempre ripiene di quella modestia, che'l maledico nemico mio ricerca ne'miei detti, non l'avendo egli nell' animo e nell' azioni sue. E s'io avessi così a parlar con V. A come ho a scrivere, non senza molto rossore potrei ragionare, ma la scrittura non arrossa, e con V. S. posso lodar me stesso senza nojar lei in alcuna parte. Perciocchè ella è così ricca dell'eccellenze, e delle lodi convenevoli a Principe, e a Principe formato di Filosofo, che udendo le lodi de' privati, non ha che invidiare, o di che rammaricarsi. Dico adunque, che essendosi il Duca accorto, che s'era molto ingannato nell' opinione, ch'aveva portato della mia pazzia, e della mia malvagità, e avvedutosi insieme, che in quella parte, che appartiene alla suf-

No. XXI. ficienza, avea fatto concetto inferiore a'meriti miei, pensò, che si convenisse alla sua grandezza il riconoscere largamente quello che tardi aveva conosciuto, e contrappesando la tardanza del riconoscimento, e ricompensando con favori, e con comodi tutti i disprezzi, e tutti i disagi, che per sua mala informazione, e per altrui pessima natura avea sopportati: della qual sua deliberazione io avvedutomi, sebben molto mi compiacqui della buona volontà, non mi compiaceva però dell' effetto; e andava rivolgendo fra me stesso, che s'in mediocre stato che pendeva all' umiltà, io era stato così fieramente soggetto agli strali dell' invidia cortigiana, maggiormente sarei sottoposto a i medesimi, se dopo così gran caduta, con subito e inaspettato rivolgimento di fortuna, io passassi dall' uno all' altro estremo di favore e di condizione, e oltre che'l desiderio di quiete, e l'amor degli studi mi ritiravano dalle grandezze cortigiane, mi ci faceva anco restio una mia naturale, non punto finta, ne affettata modestia, e la conoscenza ch'ho d'alcune mie imperfezioni, per le quali io non mi credeva essere interamente capace di que' favori, che voleva il Duca versare in me con sì larga liberalità; e desiderava io piuttosto, ch'egli con quella giustizia, che comparte i premii secondo i meriti di ciascuno, onorasse me di que' favori dicevoli alle mie qualità, i quali fossero da me ricevuti, non come ricompensa de' miei affanni sofferti, nè come guiderdone de' miei meriti, ma come dono della sua liberalità: e quella medesima azione, che da lui fosse proceduta come giusta, e come grata, da me fosse gradita come cortese, e come liberale, nè con animo men composto desiderava io la pena del nemico mio, parendomi bastevole quella, ch'egli pativa per le furie della sua coscienza, e per lo scorno d'esser caduto dall' opinione d'altissimo valore, e bontà non minor, in cui prima l'aveva il Duca, e la Duchessa, e quella parte della città, e della corte che'l misurava dalla fama divulgata con molto artificio da' suoi seguaci, e da alcuni suoi molto prima pensati, e molto maturati ragionamenti: e quali egli si lasciava condurre quasi sprovveduto, gonfiandosi dell' applauso de' cortigiani, e dell' aura popolare; e sopra tutto della severità del ciglio filosofico, sopra il quale non altrimenti, che'l cielo sopra Atlante, pareva, che l'onor del Duca, e del ben pubblico fusse appogiato. E questa sua pena, non solo saziava ogni mio giustissimo sdegno, ma mi mosse anco talora a compassione della sua vergogna, e cercai con ogni ufficio di cortesia, e d'umiltà di consolarlo: e s'avessi in lui trovata alcuna corrispondenza di mutua volontà, l'avrei ricevu-

to nel primo luogo d'amicizia, e di benevoglienza. Or questo mio desiderio manifesto in tutti i segni, in tutte le parole, in tutte l'azioni mie, potè dar alcun pretesto alla mutazione dell' animo del Duca; o piuttosto al maligno di farlo mutare, conciosiacosache, il Duca giudicando che la mia modestia fusse alquanto superba, fu persuaso, che alla sua riputazione si convenisse trattarmi sì, ch'io fussi grande, e onorato, ma di quel onore, che poteva solamente dipendere da lui; non di quello, che che con gli studj, e coll' opre poteva procacciarmi: anzi s'alcuno n'avea acquistato, o era per acquistare, tutto consentiva, che fusse oscurato, e macchiato di vergogna, o di indegnità. Sicchè, in somma, l'ultimo suo pensiero fu l'ammantellare la scelleragine del suo ministro col mio palese vitupero; e nobilitare poi, e far adorna la mia vergogna con gli ornamenti del suo favore: onde avvenne, che tutte le mie composizioni, quanto migliori le giudicava, tanto più gli cominciavano a spiacere: e avrebbe voluto ch'io non avessi aspirato a niuna lode d'ingegno, e a niuna fama di lettere; e che tra gli agj, e i comodi, e i piaceri menassi una vita molle, delicata, e oziosa, trapassando, quasi fuggitivo, dall'onore, da Parnaso, dal Liceo, e dall' Accademia agli alloggiamenti d'Epicuro; e in quella parte degli alloggiamenti, ove nè Vergilio, nè Catullo, nè Orazio, nè Lucrezio stesso albergarono giammai. Il qual pensiero suo, o piuttosto d'altri, perciocchè così era suo, come a' corpi gentili sono l'infermità, non nate per malignità d'umori, ma per contagioni appigliate, fu non dubbiamente consosciuto da me, e mi mosse a tanto, e sì giusto sdegno che dissi più volte con viso aperto, e con lingua sciolta, ch'avrei meglio amato d'esser servitore d'alcun Principe nemico suo, s'alcun ve n'ha, che egli sia nemico, che consentire a tanta indegnità: e in somma, *Odia verbis aspera movi:* sicchè il Duca consentì, ch'altri s'usurpasse la possessione delle mie composizioni, già a lui dedicate, acciocchè non perfette, e non intere, e non viste uscissero in luce, e fussero censurate da quel Sofista (filosofo dire volli; sempre quì erro) che già molti anni sono andava apparecchiando arme contra me, e raccogliendo veleno, e infettandone mezza Italia; acciocchè tutto da tutti fosse contra me in un tempo medesimo vomitato, e fussero censurate per lo più con quelle ragioni, delle quali parte avea preso dalle lettere mie, che con industria degna di filosofo era solito d'aprire e serrare, falsificando forse col sigillo, come già la filosofia avea falsificata: parte da un fanciullo, che l'avea preso da me, al quale il nuovo Censorino, o per dir meglio, No. XXI.

No. XXI. il novello Socrate, con iscambievole gratitudine insegnava in que' loro ragionamenti notturni di por così bene le virtù morali in esecuzione. Ma à me non manca che rispondere loro. E se Dio difenderà così la mia vita dall' insidie de' privati, come l'ha difesa da' pericoli maggiori, non dubito punto, ch'egli non abbia a mordersi le dita, per pentimento d'esser entrato armato d'arme furtive, quasi nuovo Martano, in aringo: ove non contra me, ma contra il simulacro mio (che simulacro de' poeti sono i poemi) quasi contra Chintana, corre lance, che non offendono chi non sente d'esser offeso: ma fa solo con lo strepito maravigliare que' suoi, a' quali la provvidenza del buon cavaliero par maravigliosa. O Dio, e sarà dunque vero, che non debba sentir l'evento, e meritar il gastigo di colui, del quale ha così bene imitato la viltà, e la sceleraggine? Ma s'io non potrò risaper ciò, ch'essi scrivono contra me, saprò almeno far guerra offensiva contra le lettere, e contra i costumi: e lo farò di maniera, che non vibrerò entimema, che non vada a ferire il cuore; questo voglio aver detto contra l'oppositore. Ma che dirò di quel Signore, che si ha preso la signoria delle mie cose, se non forse ch'egli lo giudica giusto posesso, e non usurpazione? e forse, se ci è violenza, è onorata per me, ma dannosa molto, l'una e l'altra delle quali è tanta che in quell' ordine non fu in alcun tempo maggiore. Ben vorrei, che o per cortesia egli cedendo ogni sua ragione, si contentasse di privarsene, e renderlemi; o se per sue le vuole, come sue l'amasse, e à loro, e à me desiderasse pregio, e onore, che già l'onor del servo non si può scompagnare da quello del buon Sig. nè questo da quello nelle azioni, che all' uno, e all' altro comunemente appartengono. Comunque sia, sebbene io non credo, che le mie composizioni, nè le opposizioni si leggano se non scritte a mano, e da pochi, desiderei nondimeno, che quelle mi fussero restituite, acciocchè con libera elezione potessi mutarle e migliorarle, secondo il mio proponimento, e disporne a mio prò, e a mia voglia; e queste manifestare per risponder loro, come meglio sapessi; che, se non hanno arrecato altro contra me, che quello, che da me è stato lor detto, non stimo che sia grande difficoltà il rispondere; nè a quello istesso diffiderei molto di contradire. Ma (per tornare, onde mi sono alquanto allontanato) conoscendo il Sig. Duca, che questo suo non era giusto desiderio, e volendo, che fusse posto ad effetto da me, nè potendo esser posto, se non era inteso, e vergognandosi di significarlomi con parole, procurò di farlomi conoscere con cenni; siccome prima poteva verisimilmente infingermi di non intendere, così avea troppo desiderato di ubbidire

a' cenni ancora de' suoi comandamenti; e sebben mi sforzai di ridur il negozio da' cenni alle parole, non potei, perchè alle parole non era risposto se non con parole vane, e con fatti cattivi, e perchè tuttavia dalla lor parte, se non dalla mia, continuavano i cenni, tentai di parlare alla Signora Duchessa, e a Madama Leonora: ma mi fu sempre chiusa la strada dell' udienza, e molte fiate senza rispetto, e senza occasione alcuna i portieri mi vietarono d'entrar nelle camere loro. Volli parlarne a S. A. ma compresi, ch'egli aborriva d'udirmi in questa materia: ne parlai al suo confessore, ma indarno. Sicchè non potendo io vivere in così continuo tormento, ove niuna consolazione di parole, nè di fatti temperava l'infelicità del mio stato, fu vinta finalmente quella infinita mia pazienza, e lasciando i libri, e le scritture mie, dopo la servitù di tredici anni, continuata con infelice costanza, me ne partij quasi nuovo Biante, e me n'andai a Mantova, ove fu proceduto meco co' medesimi termini, co' quali si procedeva in Ferrara, salvo che dal Sereniss. Principe, giovinetto d'età, e di costumi eroici, di quei favori, che alla sua tenera età era conceduto di farmi, fui consolato graziosamente. Da Mantova passai a Padova, e a Venezia: ed ivi ancor trovando induriti gli animi, perchè l'interesse, e il desiderio di compiacer a' Principi serrava le porte alla misericordia, feci tragitto nel vostro stato, in ogni tempo onorato ricetto del innocenza, e della virtù travagliata. Ha inteso V. A. la narrazione degli accidenti, avvenutimi dopo la mia fuga, e le cagioni che mi mossero prima a tornar in Ferrara senza invito, e partirmene poi senza comiato: colla quale quelle ragioni che appartengono a provare la falsità della calunnia, sono in guisa per natura congiunte che senza alcun mio studio, per se stesse appajono facilmente. Or da questa narrazione potrei trar gran copia di ragioni, colle quali mi darebbe il cuore di provare a V. Alt. che sarebbe operazione degna della sua virtù l'abbracciare la mia protezione in maniera ch'io avessi à ringraziare la fortuna, che mi avesse porta occasione, di aver bisogno del suo favore. E certo ch'io nel principio di questo mio ragionamento aveva proposto, di farlo, e di non risparmiare niuna sorte di libertà di parlare, niuna maniera d'argomento, e insomma trattarne in modo, come se del vostro non del mio interesse si disputasse, del vostro, non del mio onore si consigliasse, parendomi il mio onore, e il mio interesse accompagnato in guisa coll' onestà, che da niuno ingegno di sofista potesse essere discompagnato. E l'onestà volevo io derivare dalla qualità, e dalla novità della causa, la quale tirando in alto, e riducendo da' particolari all' universale era mio pro-

No. XXI.

No. XXI. ponimento di mostrarvi, che la contesa non è tra me, e l'avversario mio, ma fra il torto, el dovere; fra la giustizia e la violenza; fra l'umanità, e l'impietà: e che cadendo la determinazione contra la parte migliore, con esempio pernicioso si confermava quell' antica opinione celebrata nelle Scene Tragiche, che'l prudente non dee ammaestrare i figliuoli sino all' eccellenza del sapere; perchè s'apparecchia infesta l'invidia de' cittadini; sicchè tacerebbono le Muse, diverrebbe muta l'eloquenza, si chiuderebbono le scuole, e l'Accademie, si sbigottirebbono gl'ingegni pellegrini, e quasi da torpore agghiacciate, e oppresse dormirebbono le scienze, e l'arti liberali, o sarebbono a morte condannate, o rilegáte in qualche barbara nazione, tornerebonno di nuovo a i Bracmani, e a Ginnosofisti; e quel che non meno importa, il timore, e il rispetto, che si dee a' Principi rimarebbe esposto agli scherni, e all' insolenza, e al disprezzo de' ministri scellerati. Voleva io poi, richiamando questa medesima causa, e ristringendola alle circonstanze delle persone, ridurvi a memoria, chi siete voi, chi sono io, e chi è l'avversario mio: e quello che s'aspetta da voi di generoso verso me, di cortese, verso lui, di giusto e di rigoroso: e maravigliarmi, ch'egli fosse favorito da chi l'odia, o lo dee odiare; e io non ajutato da chi m'ama o è tenuto di amarmi. Voleva anco persuadervi, che niun rispetto de' Principi, degli amici, o parenti, dovrebbe ritenervi dal favorirmi, dal darmi cortese ricetto in questo stato, sin che le mie cose avessero ricevuto qualche onesta forma d'accomodamento: e ch'era più convenevole alla vostra grandezza, che la vostra intercessione temperasse il lor sdegno, che non sarebbe, che la vostra buona volontà fusse da alcuna loro poco amorevole ufficio impedita, e ultimamente voleva, con buona pace vostra, lamentarmi di coloro, per grandi e per soprani, che siano, i quali non facendomi ingiustizia, credono di farmi giustizia; non s'accorgendo, che delle due parti di giustizia, l'una quanto men commendata dalle leggi, tanto più degna dell'animo eroico, è da loro affatto tralasciata, e abbandonata. Ma sovvenendomi, ch'io dissi di voler parlar con voi, in quel modo che si conviene alla vostra virtù, che si ragionasse; or mi sovviene in conseguenza ciò che voi potete per voi stesso argomentare, o conchiudere, ed è, che torto si farebbe all' accutezza del vostro ingegno, col procedere più oltre sillogizzando; perchè siccome la bontà dell'animo vostro non ha bisogno di preghi, che la muovano a generosamente operare, così la bellezza del vostro intelleto non lo ha di ragione, che sapendo l'apparenza della verità gli dimostri quel,

che si conviene. Che farò dunque, poichè pregare, ed argomentare non debbo? nè so dilettare; anzi m'avviso, che le mie noje infastidiscono altrui; e che voi siate altrettanto sazio di leggere, quant'io stanco di scrivere. Tacerei certo, s'un affetto smoderato non mi trasportasse alquanto a ragionare: il qual siami concesso di sfogare con esso voi; e crediate, ch'io non ragiono per perturbare l'animo vostro, ma per isgombrare il mio dalla passione, che giustamente m'affligge, la quale mi giova di manifestare in luogo ove almeno i lamenti miei abbiano alcuno onorato testimonio. E certo miserabile cosa è l'essere privo della patria, spogliato delle fortune, l'andar errando cón disagio, e con pericolo; esser tradito dagli amici, offeso da' parenti, e schernito da' padroni; l'aver in un medesimo tempo il corpo infermo, e l'animo travagliato dalla dolorosa memoria delle cose passate, dalla noja delle presenti, dal timor delle future: miserabile, che alla benevoglienza si risponda con odio; alla simplicità con inganno; alla sincerità con fraude: alla generosità con bassezza d'animo; miserabil molto ch'io sia odiato, perchè io sia stato offeso: nè sia ben voluto, perchè dopo l'offese abbia amato gli offensori, ch'io perdoni a fatti, ch'altri non perdoni a' detti, ch'io dimentichi l'ingiurie ricevute, altri non dimentichi le fattemi, e ch'io desideri l'onor altrui ancora con alcun mio danno, altri desideri la mia vergogna senza alcun suo prò. Ma più ancora miserabile, ch'io sia incorso in questa miseria, non per malizia ma per simplicità, non per legierézza, ma per costanza, non per esser troppo cupido del mio utile, ma per esserne troppo disprezzatore. E più anco è miserabile, ch'io non sia stato mai appo alcuno miserabile, nè quando nel principio delle mie sciagure alquanto più me n'affligeva, che ad uomo forte non conveniva; nè quando poi esercitato ne' mali, gli hò sostenuti con ogni robustezza d'animo. Ma sovra tutto è miserabile, ch'io sia stato precipitato in tante miserie da uomo così degno d'odio, com'io di compassione, E pur O giudicio di Dio, quanto se' tu nascoso, s'a chi è portato odio, non gli nuoce odio, che si porti, se a me è avuta compassione, non mi giova compassione, che mi sia avuta: egli ha errato, io son punito; a me nuocono le lodi dell'ingegno, a lui non son dannosi i vizj dell'animo: io dispiaccio altrui, perchè piacciono i miei mal fortunati componimenti, egli è tenuto caro, ancorchè dispiacciano le sue mal pensate azioni; a me non è lecita la difesa, a lui è conceduta la offesa: a' miei studj non sono proposti altri premj, che l'indignità, e'l disagio, a' suoi non solo l'onore e le ric-

No. XXI.

No. XXI. chezze, ma la tirannide. Non sono tiranni i Principi, non sono io; egli è il tiranno, egli esercita la tirannide; ed i Principi, e le Repubbliche grandissime non si sdegnano di servire indegnissamente a i desiderj ingiustissimi d'un Sofista: non amano più i Principi le lor glorie, perchè congiunta la loro colla mala satisfazione di costui; non favoriscono l'industria, perchè costui vuol gli altri oziosi per fare egli il tutto. Aspetto omai, che si vieti al Pendasio il leggere, e al Panigarola il predicare, poichè a costui non piace, e che da questi uomini mirabili sia dismesso l'ufficio loro, con tanta utilità del Mondo, e così gloriosamente esercitato. Ma non piaccia a Dio, che egli mitighi gli acutissimi morsi dell'invidia con sì fatte satisfazioni, e a me giova di sperare, ch'io potro a suo mal grado e scrivere, e favellare, ed egli potrà forse rallegrarsi di vedermi povero, mal agiato; ma di vedermi umile e abbietto non goderà giammai. E certo, che a me non tanto increscе di vedermi privo d'alcuni comodi, per li commodi stessi, quanto per la poca riputazione che à me, e per la molta satisfazione che a lui ne segue; il qual filosofo di nome e d'abito, e sofista d'ingegno, e ippocrita di costumi fa quella stima degli onori, e delle ricchezze che da' cortigiani, e da' mercanti suol essere fatta. Ma io non stimo molto sì fatti beni, nè affato gli disprezzo: e maggiormente gli disprezzerei, se non fosse ch'io sarei necessitato a disprezzar anco coloro, che possono con tali premj guiderdonare il valore, e l'industria degli uomini. Perciocchè tanto ciascun d'essi suol essere onorato quanto è in opinione d'aver fatto, o di poter fare altrui beneficio: non parlo di quei pochi, a' quali l'onore si concede come premio dell' eccellente virtù; benchè questi ancora quell' altra maniera d'onore più popolare non sogliano, se non grandemente, gradire.

No. XXII.—P. 59.

ANALYSIS OF A LETTER OF TASSO TO SCIPIO GONZAGA, AND OF A DISCOURSE BY THAT POET, ON THE VARIOUS ACCIDENTS OF HIS LIFE.

No. XXII. I have inserted into the text, a passage from a long letter of Tasso, to his friend Scipio Gonzaga, written from the Hospital of St Anne, in May 1579.

Of this epistle, I can, from its great length, merely give a summary, as well as of a very prolix *Discourse* by our poet, *on the various accidents of his Life*, addressed to the same ecclesiastic. Each of these compositions, besides its prolixity, is full of irrelevant matter, and to print them at length would greatly add to the expence of this book, without an equivalent advantage. No. XXII.

Tasso begins his letter to Gonzaga, by remarking, that, as he had, by a former epistle, removed the shame and confusion of a free address, it is his intention to write him plainly, and without constraint. That, on the other hand, it is Gonzaga's duty to listen to him, not only as a good man, a Christian, and an old friend; but as one also, who had been, in part, the cause of his calamities. Our poet then proceeds to say, that, taking it for granted that the two most serene princes (the Dukes of Ferrara, and Florence,) are offended against him, he submits it to the consideration of his friend, whether his offences had been such as to deserve a cruel punishment. He takes notice of the mildness of punishments among the Romans, and observes that, if it be the office of judges to chastise, it is that of princes to pardon. He specifies some examples of crimes committed against the ancestors of the princes whom he had displeased, which had been graciously pardoned, and adds, that, although these criminals had been nobles and powerful men, with whom in rank he could not be compared, yet that he could not altogether consider himself as of no value, since he had been so much esteemed by Gonzaga? "Who," says Tasso, "has loved me more than you, who has more esteemed me? and how could you, who are yourself adorned with so much goodness and worth, have loved and esteemed a person who had neither worth nor goodness. You condemn yourself, you convict your own judgement if you can condemn me. If *you* do not know me, who can be expected to do so? since with no one have I associated so long, or in so familiar and tender a manner. Who, likewise, is a more profound observer, or a more sagacious calculator of the merits of individuals than yourself? or who in conversation is more free and open, or rather more inconsiderate than I. Would that it had been different! for I had never fallen into infelicity like this; but there are not in my mind, nor ever were, any nooks or labyrinths; but every sentiment of my soul, whether ire or love, whether dissatisfaction or content, might be read in my countenance, and was manifested by my tongue."

No. XXII. The poet then goes on to remark, that for these reasons, for those qualities, on account of which he had been deemed, by Gonzaga, worthy of love and of esteem, it seemed reasonable that his errors or imperfections should be pardoned, and that the favour of some prince should be demanded in his behalf. Tasso then enumerates several princes and great personages—the Cardinals of Este, Medici, Albano, Guastavillani, the Pope's nephew, the lords and princesses of Este, the Dukes of Urbino and Mantua, and the Duke and Prince of Savoy, from none of whom (he says,) he can perhaps expect intercession, on account of involuntary offences committed against them. Other great personages, however, he had not merely never offended, but had always praised, and why did none of these exert themselves in his behalf? In this number are classed the Duchess and Prince of Mantua, the Duchess of Ferrara, the Duke of Nevers, the princes of Guise, particularly the Duke of Mayenne.

"Indeed," continues Tasso, "I might expect some favour, not only from the personages whom I have last named, but also from the Dukes of Mantua, and of Urbino. I might expect it from the Duke of Mantua, on account of the confidence I put in him, incited by which I departed from Ferrara, where I lived, truly, and was served like a gentleman, and where, by the near prospect I then had of recovering my health, I might reasonably have hoped to have accommodated in time every difficulty. Yet such was my trust in the Duke of Mantua, that I left Ferrara on foot to fly to him; whereas, when I returned to this city, I came on horseback. With the Duke of Savoy, I may claim some merit, on account of that toilsome journey, when I waded on foot, through mud and water to Turin, and on account of all I suffered in my health, both during my passage thither, and my stay. Nor ought the Duke of Urbino to forget the ancient dependence of my father and myself on him, and on his house; and the gratitude and sensibility which I have always testified for their benefits. In short, from all the three princes whom I have named, I may claim protection, on account of the grandeur of their mind, of their blood and fortune; and as princes also, to whom no other but myself, who of all beings am the most unhappy and wretched, has applied in vain for favour."

Tasso then enters upon a very elegant digression on the fable of Homer, that there are two urns before the gates of Heaven, from which Jupiter dis-

tributes good and evil, the former always mixed with the latter, the evil often pure. He remarks, that this is a Gentile exhibition of the Divinity, but that the Christian representation of the Almighty is, that he always dispenses good and never evil, the latter being only a deficiency of good. He adds, that the sun shines, that the dews fall upon the just and unjust, and that therefore, whether princes imitate God or nature, they ought to be liberal of benefits, without partiality or rage. No. XXII.

Our bard next proceeds to say, that the princes above mentioned, or any prince who countenanced him, should have more regard to his [Tasso's] benefit and advantage, than to their own comfort or convenience. He then enters into some refined speculations on this subject; and, returning to his theme, again wonders that the Dukes of Savoy, of Mantua, and of Urbino, all of them illustrious princes, and patrons of the arts and sciences, should be so cool and languid in his behalf. Why, continues he, should the Prince of Mantua, and, if the Cardinal of Medici is, from respect for his brother, prevented from favouring me, why should not the Cardinal of Este protect me, who is so liberal of generous actions?* "Oh why is there not among so many distinguished ecclesiastics one, who, imitating Christ, will drive with a scourge from the temple, the buyers and sellers—the buyers and sellers of my wretched blood!"

Tasso then goes on to say, that, if the grandeur of the two princes who chastise him be such, as (from respect) to hinder the interference of princes of their own order, or of cardinals, nothing of this kind need to weigh with the Pope, or emperor, their sovereigns, or with the king of Spain, his natural lord. He asks, whether if these be deaf to him, no one could be found, who would represent his case to the king of France. This prince [Henry III.] he

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† E per ragionar de' Preti, se'l Cardinal de' Medici dal rispetto del Fratello è ritenuto a non mostrar alcun segno di quell'animo Eroico, ch'egli tragge da' Leoni, e da' Clementi, e da gli Ippoliti qual rispetto può ritenere il Cardinal d'Este libero Signore di tutte le sue generosissime azioni? Vol. X. p. 384. It appears from this, that Tasso, at the commencement of his confinement, considered the family of Medici as much more indignant against him, than that of Este, which is a new proof, if any more were required, of the absurdity of the hypothesis which attributes that event to his passion for Leonora.

No. XXII. praises in the highest manner, "and surely," adds the poet, "he ought to have some compassion on me, who have been deprived of all my paternal and maternal property, on account of my descent from a father who pursued the interests of France so warmly, and who, I believe, was known to the queen mother, and on some occasions favoured. And if this princess [Catharine de' Medici,] would vouchsafe to restore me to that height of reputation, of comfort, and of quiet, from which the anger of her relations has made me fall, such an act of pity would not, perhaps, be unworthy to accompany so many others of fortitude, magnanimity, and manly prudence, which render her a queen as glorious and memorable as any other, of whom mention is made, in ancient or in modern story."

"But if," continues Tasso, "no other can be found who shall deign to present my prayers to such exalted sovereigns, you, oh courteous sir! ought not to disdain this office, but to consider it as your duty, since there is none other whom I have reverenced so greatly, or loved so tenderly."—He adds, that, even though he had the imperfections imputed to him, this would not cancel every obligation to beneficence and courtesy, but that something would be still due to the memory of so many sweet conversations, so many reciprocal acts of kindness. After an allusion to the choice of Hercules, and his own harsh treatment in the path of virtue, so that he is almost tempted to follow that of pleasure, Tasso mentions his design to have written two heroic poems, and four tragedies, a passage which I have inserted into the text. He subjoins (in allusion to the name of Gonzaga,) that the ancient Scipio is not more celebrated on account of his other virtues, than for his friendship for Lælius. "You may indeed," says he, "affirm with reason, that, if you are Scipio, I am not a Lælius, and that, if I have been your friend, I no longer merit to be such; nor shall I deny, that in many respects you would affirm the truth. But you also cannot deny, that, while you wished to benefit me, you have grievously harmed me, and that you have in some degree occasioned, and almost rendered my errors necessary. Thus it would be an action worthy of your virtue, that, if you have involuntarily injured, you should voluntarily assist me; and that you would not that my faults, and (let me be allowed to say it,) your inconsiderate affection, should be the occasion of my misery, and of your own advantage."

The poet concludes with exhorting his friend to do every thing in his power to procure his deliverance, and especially to obtain for him the favour of some sovereign prince, that thus the bitter draught of gall and wormwood, which he had drunk, and was continually drinking, might be taken away. No. XXII.

II. The *Discourse* of Tasso to Scipio Gonzaga, *on the Various Accidents of his Life,** is exceedingly prolix, and full of irrelevant matter. It is without date of year, but Tasso informs his friend, that he had just then copied it out upon *il mercordi santo,* [Holy Wednesday,] that is on the Wednesday which precedes Good Friday; and from internal evidence, I think it was written in 1579. As this was three years before the adoption of the Gregorian style, the discourse must, if I am right in the above conjecture, have been composed about the middle of March, and only a few days before, or a few days after, Tasso's confinement in St Anne's. My reason for thinking it was written at this period, is, that Tasso speaks, in it, as if he had just then returned to Ferrara, at the time of Alphonso's nuptials, and at the same time does not at all speak definitely of his being confined, or at least does not dwell upon it as, had he considered it lasting, he would have done. "I departed," writes he, "from Ferrara, a place, where, if I was not born, I may consider myself as born a second time, and to which I have been now constrained to return, not only by necessity, but urged also by the extreme desire which I had to kiss the hands of his highness, and to regain, on the occasion of these nuptials, some part of his favour. And, although I do not as yet see any symptom by which I can hope that he will restore me to his service, or by his courtesy promote my intentions to serve the serene Prince of Mantua, a prince whom, both from the opinion that I entertain of his singular worth, from the marvellous expectations which he excites, for the favours which I have received from him, and my affectionate regard, I would prefer to all others as a patron. It seems to me, however, that the Duke has used considerable courtesy to me, since he has not thought me unworthy to kiss his hands after so many un-

* *Discorso di Torquato Tasso sopra varj accidenti della sua vita, scritto a Scipion Gonzaga, Opere,* vol. VIII. p. 242.

No. XXII. bridled words, and I hope that if he has not been avaricious to me of this favour, he will not be less bountiful in regard to others."*

It appears reasonable to conclude, therefore, that the *Discourse* was written at the period which I have now assigned, and that it is the *former epistle* to which Tasso alludes at the beginning of the letter, of which I have just been giving a summary.

Our poet begins his *discourse* with remarking, that he knows not whether to use supplication or reasoning; as, on the one hand, his afflictions are so dreadful and notorious, that no words could render them more pathetic, or more public; and that, on the other, the intellect of Gonzaga is so acute, that he could not fail to anticipate every argument that could be used. Tasso, however, prefers this latter method, and professes that he will speak to Gonzaga, not as to a senator or judge, but as a lover of philosophy to a consummate philosopher.

All the charges against a person may (according to the poet) be reduced into three heads,—1st. Offences against God *immediately*, [as heresy,]—or, 2d. *Mediately* by injuring our neighbour, [as murder, treachery,] and of offences of this second kind, those against princes are the most heinous, since they may be considered, in some degree, as committed against the images of God. —Or, 3d. by injuring ourselves, [as intemperance.] Such being the classification of offences, (continues Tasso) I have been accused of some of them, as of rebellion against him whom I had chosen as my prince,—of injuring my friends and acquaintances,—and of injustice towards myself, for which reasons, I have been excluded, not from the citizenship of a single city, but of the world itself.

After some pathetic complaints, Tasso proceeds to say, that there never had been an accuser so bitter, who did not leave some of the juvenile actions of the accused in oblivion, especially when these had not been committed immediately against God, and but slightly against a neighbour: *His* opponents,

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* Serassi, (p. 282.) on the authority of MS. letters of Tasso, speaks as if the duke shewed himself quite hardened towards the poet, on his return from Turin; but this (which I have adopted in the text, from the Italian biographer,) must perhaps be received with some modification.

however, had eagerly raked into all his faults, and when his life was reform- No. XXII.
ing, and becoming pure, had blamed his manhood for follies, not its own. His offences of this kind (he adds) had not, moreover, if his conscience did not greatly flatter him, been of a very aggravated sort. "But," continues he, "the charges of heresy, joined to those of treachery against my prince, formed such a deluge of misery, that no rampart of human reason, nor favour of the most serene princesses, who laboured much for my benefit, were sufficient to resist it. Now, what shall I answer to these heavy impeachments, or what testimony can I adduce in my behalf—your own, my lord, which, if it does not wholly disburthen me of this weight of infamy, at least shall greatly lighten it."

Tasso then enters into a long metaphysical discussion on the nature of belief, and on the liberty of the will, and adds, that it is no defence of incredulity to state that our belief is independent of ourselves. He then addresses, in a very eloquent manner, the Supreme Being, and confesses that he had contemplated the Almighty merely in a philosophical view, as the great first Cause, and Preserver of the universe, but that he had entertained doubts about the incarnation, and the immortality of the soul. That on this account, he could not have a firm belief in the efficacy of the sacraments, the authority of the Roman pontiff, or in the existence of hell and purgatory. Tasso continues to state, that his doubts were painful, and that, owing to the strength of the terrour and horrour with which they inspired him, he had been led sometimes to impart them to a friend or acquaintance, and from the same cause, communicated and confessed very frequently, but that his scruples were feebly and cautiously revealed to the confessor, lest he might not obtain absolution. He adds, that one of his principal fears was that he was an infidel, and could not be absolved; but he comforted himself in the reflection, that his incredulity was not the fruit of obstinacy, since he had always wished the exaltation of the faith, and of the Roman see; and since, though he frequently associated in the most intimate manner with political infidels of that church, he had always detested the name of Lutheran. He subjoins, that he had never talked of his doubts to any one for the purpose of contaminating him, but of unloading his own mind, and that after the divine hand had struck him where his humanity was most sensible—in his honour and love of glory;

No. XXII. his religious principles grew stronger; he attended still more frequently the communions of the church; thought less presumptuously of the powers of his own intellect; and became, at length, a submissive and affectionate child of the faith.

After this long address to the Almighty, of which some passages in the original are very eloquent, Tasso proceeds to a portion of his story which is obscure, and upon which, as this part of his *discourse* is somewhat mutilated, it is difficult to throw light. From the fragments, however, which remain, compared with an *address* of our poet *to the courts of judicature, and people of Naples,* * it appears that one of Tasso's friends, having, in his opinion, accused him to the inquisition, the poet had, after obtaining permission from the Duke of Ferrara, presented himself before one of the members of that court, and had denied and retorted the charge of infidelity. He complains that the inquisitor had not gone through the usual formalities, nor allowed him the accustomed defences, and that, when he had a second time presented himself before the inquisition at Bologna, sufficient regard had neither been paid to his exculpation nor his complaints. †

After this defence of himself from the charge of heresy, Tasso proceeds to the imputation of treachery to his prince; a prince, he remarks, distinguished by every noble endowment, and whom he had, on every account, the highest obligations to serve. "If," says he, "I had planned any thing against the life, states, or honour of a prince who had treated me with such benevolence, I should deserve torments more cruel than were ever inflicted by Phalaris, or by Mezentius. But in truth," continues he, "I never offended him, except by some inconsiderate words, such as are often heard in the mouths of dissatisfied courtiers, and in treating about a change of service, urged by that necessity which he might learn from me if he chose, and in a mode which is known to you, illustrious sir, and at which I cannot think he had reason to take offence." Tasso proceeds to say, that he might enter into a long narration, from which it would appear that he had not been culpable, but unfortunate, but that he neither wishes to accuse nor irritate any one, nor did

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* *Oper.* vol. X. p. 372.

† See *above*, vol. I. p. 309.

he need to justify himself to his friend. He confesses that he deserved some chastisement on account of his conduct, but assuredly, not vengeance; and adds, that he writes to Gonzaga, not to inform him of any thing, but in order (says he) that "these reasonings of mine may be presented to their highnesses, sweetened by your favour, like gales which become odoriferous amidst flowers, or as water is purified and brightens in its course." No. XXII.

Our poet next observes, that the same act, according to the disposition or intention of the agent, may be denominated *correction, punishment,* or *vengeance,* and adds, that he will examine which of these is the object of the princes whom he has offended. And, beginning with the first, he remarks, that the union of mind and body is so close, that every thing but intelligence is common between them. That, therefore, on account of this connection, it is impossible to make the body uncomfortable, without destroying that harmony of which it is the instrument, and that, on this account, a mental physician, whose only object is to correct, would be careful not to aggravate corporeal infirmities. After a pathetic complaint of these, Tasso adds, that he can never be cured without open testimonies of esteem and respect, and if he is not restored, as formerly, to the service of princes, and the conversation of nobles.

With regard to *punishment,* this, our bard observes, ought to be proportioned to the offence, which his had by no means been. "I will say also, (continues he) that the principal action for which I am blamed, and which, perhaps, is the only cause for which I am chastised, * ought not perhaps to be punished as absolutely guilty, but as mixed; since it did not proceed from choice, but from necessity—necessity not absolute, but conditional—and through fear, at one time of death; at another, of the greatest shame; at a third, of a hapless and perpetual disquiet..... Nor do I judge the words which I have spoken less worthy of pardon, since they were used by a man not merely angry, but on that occasion overcome by rage; and since I am conscious, and could adduce many proofs that, in loving my lord, and in desiring

* His design to leave the service of Alphonso, I presume.

No. XXII. his greatness and felicity, I have yielded to few of his most intimate favourites." Tasso afterward remarks, that the impulses of anger ought not to be punished too severely, as being in some degree involuntary; and adds, that he had met with the most cruel and unexampled punishment, namely, an obstruction in the exercise of his art, on which account he had departed the second time from Ferrara. He owns that he is not absolutely restrained from composition, but says that his liberty is of little use, unless it be accompanied with that honour which nourishes the arts. On this subject he is very diffuse, and he then enters into a discussion on arithmetical and geometrical proportions, and specifies some moral modes, which, according to him, may be contemplated as corresponding with these relations.

On the last article, viz. *vengeance*, the poet is very short, *tantae ne animis* (says he) *cœlestibus irae?* Nor can it enter into his mind that a passion so vile could taint the souls of such distinguished princes, especially towards a being so weak and humble as himself. After some very sensible remarks on this head, and a high compliment to the pope (Gregory XIII.) Tasso asks if (amid such blessings of Providence, and in such a holy season) Christian princes could be princes of vengeance? Would they not follow the example of their glorious ancestors; would they not remember their own heroic and magnanimous deeds; would they not be regardful of Christian charity? "I speak not," adds he, "to them as I would to judges; I do not excuse but accuse myself; I do not diminish, but increase my faults; I do not recount the wrongs which I have received from their subjects; I ask not justice—no! but grace and pardon."

Tasso concludes by earnestly exhorting Gonzaga to intercede for him to the utmost of his power, not only with the two princes whom he had offended, but with all the princes of Italy, or whatever sovereign might be useful to him in his calamities. He subjoins the following postscript: "The hurry of sending off this *discourse* to-day, which is Holy Wednesday, and a day on which the courier leaves us, has prevented me from giving it but a very cursory revisal. I have corrected many things, but many perhaps have escaped me; I have the first sketch, however, which I shall studiously polish—*this* has been copied without any change. I do not remember whether it was Caligula or Claudius, who prohibited the works of Virgil and of Livy, and I am doubtful that it

was Claudius. * Your lordship will find it in Suetonius. If there be any thing in the above discourse, which is not Catholic and pious, it has been said involuntarily and through ignorance, and I submit to every correction." No. XXII.

No. XXIII.—P. 63.

SONNETS TO THE CATS IN ST ANNE'S HOSPITAL.

The following sonnets addressed to the Cats in the hospital of St Anne, are to be found among the *Rime che vanno sotto nome di* Torquato Tasso, *Oper.* vol. VI. p. 384. No. XXIII.

Come nell' ocean, s'oscura, e'nfesta
Procella il rende torbido, e sonante,
Alle stelle, onde il polo è fiammeggiante,
Stanco nocchier di notte alza la testa;
Così Io mi volgo, o bella gatta in questa
Fortuna avversa, alle tue luci sante,
E mi sembra due stelle aver davante,
Che tramontana sia nella tempesta.
Veggio un' altra gattina, e veder parmi
L'Orsa maggior colla minore: O gatte,
Lucerne del mio studio, o gatte amate!
Se Dio vi guardi dalle bastonate,
Se'l ciel vi pasca di carne, e di latte,
Fatemi luce a scriver questi carmi!

Tante le gatte son moltiplicate,
Ch'a doppio son più che l'Orse nel cielo:

* This alludes to a passage of the discourse, in which the poet, enumerating some princes who had been hostile to writers, says, "Bandi Caligola dalle libreric l'immagini, e i libri di Virgilio, e di Livio." Tasso in his deepest misery never forgot his reputation as an author.

No. XXIII.

Gatte ci son, ch'han tutto bianco il pelo,
Gatte nere ci son, gatte pezzate.
Gatte con coda, gatte discodate:
Una gatta con gobba di cammello
Vorrei vedere, e vestita di velo,
Come bertuccia; or che non la trovate?
Guardinsi i monti pur di partorire.
Che s'un topo nascesse, il poverello
Da tante gatte non potria fuggire.
Massara, Io t'ammonisco, abbi'l cervello
E l'occhio al lavezuol, ch'è sul bollire:
Corri, ve, ch'una sen porta il vitello!
Vo' farci il Ritornello,
Perchè'l sonetto appieno non si loda,
Se non somiglia a i gatti dalla coda.

No. XXIV.—P.64.

POETICAL SUPPLICATIONS OF TASSO TO THE FAMILY OF ESTE.

No. XXIV. Of the two following canzoni, the first is addressed to Alphonso, Duke of Ferrara; the second to the Princesses of Este, Lucretia and Leonora. Considered merely as poems, they are extremely beautiful; but, if we contemplate them as the productions of a mind diseased, they form important documents in the History of Man.

O magnanimo figlio
D'Alcide glorioso,
Che'l paterno valor ti lasci a tergo;
A te, che dall' esiglio
Prima in nobil riposo
Mi raccogliesti nel reale albergo,
A te rivolgo, ed ergo
Dal mio carcer profondo

No. XXIV.

Il cor, la mente, e gli occhi:
A te chino i ginocchi,
A te le guance sol di pianto inondo,
A te la lingua scioglio;
Teco, ed a te, ma non di te mi doglio.
Volgi gli occhi clementi,
E vedrai dove langue
Vil volgo, ed egro per pietà raccolto,
Sotto tutti i dolenti
Il tuo già servo esangue
Gemer, pieno di morte orrida il volto,
Fra mille pene avvolto,
Con occhi foschi, e cavi,
Con membra immonde, e brutte,
E cadenti, ed asciutte
Dell' umor della vita, e stanche e gravi,
Invidiar la vil sorte
Degli altri, cui pietà vien che conforte,
Per me pietade è spenta,
E cortesia smarrita,
S'in te, Signor, non nasce, e non si trova,
Lasso! qual me tormenta
Nova schiera infinita
Di mali? o che più mi diletta, o giova?
Ah congiurate a prova
In ciel le stelle, e'n terra
Contra me son coloro
Che s'ornan d'ostro, e d'oro,
E contra il mio Parnaso ognun fa guerra:
Ed io pietà pur chiesi
A mille, e te viepiù d'ogn' altro offesi.
Ma che? Giove s'offende,
Ed offeso, co' voti
Si placa, onde dipon poi l'arme, e l'ire:
Ed io, perchè l'orrende
Saette tue, che scoti
Sovra me, mentre fiamma, e sdegno spire,
Far non potrò, che gire
In più odiosa parte,
Rendendo i numi amici
Con voti, e sacrificj?
E'n te onorando or Giove, or Febo, or Marte,

No. XXIV.

Che tutte lor virtudi
Nel tuo petto reale, ed altre chiudi.
Ma non oso, Signore!
Stender la lingua audace
Nelle tue lodi, e dir gli scettri, e l'arme;
Che forse indegno onore
A' tuoi pregi di pace
E di guerra, sarebbe il nostro carme.
Ed io pavento, e parme,
Che'l mio cantar t'annoi;
Onde, sebben del canto
Forse m'appago, e vanto,
Temo, cigno infelice, i fulmin tuoi;
E sol pronte le penne
Colà saran, dove il tuo ciglio accenne.
Trova, Canzon, il grand' invitto Duce
Fra le due suore assiso,
Che'l vedrai forse più clemente in viso.

II.

ALLE PRINCIPESSE DI FERRARA SORELLE DEL DUCA ALFONSO.

O figlie di Renata,
Io non parlo alla pira
De' fratei, che nè pur la morte unio,
Che di regnar malnata
Voglia, e disdegno, ed ira
L'ombre, il cener, le fiamme anco partìo;
Ma parlo a voi, che pio
Produsse, e real seme,
In uno stesso seno,
Quasi in fertil terreno,
Nate, e nodrite pargolette insieme,
Quasi due belle piante
Di cui serva la terra, e il cielo amante.

No. XXIV.

A voi parlo, che suore
Del grand' Alfonso invitto,
Avete onde sprezzar Giuno, e Diana,
Ed ogni regio onore
Di quelle, ch'in Egitto
Più ristrinse co' suoi legge profana;
Che se moglie, e germana
Offrì chioma votiva,
Ch'ornò il ciel di faville,
Voti vostri ben mille,
Passando ove sua luce appena arriva,
Ardon nel primo cielo
Anzi il gran Sol d'inestinguibil zelo.
A voi parlo, in cui fanno
Sì concorde armonia
Onestà, senno, onor, bellezza, e gloria;
A voi spiego il mio affanno,
E della pena mia
Narro, e'n parte piangendo, acerba istoria,
Ed in voi, la memoria
Di voi, di me rinnovo:
Vostri effetti cortesi,
Gli anni miei tra voi spesi;
Qual son, qual fui, che chiedo, ove mi trovo,
Chi mi guidò, chi chiuse
Lasso! chi m'affidò, chi mi deluse.
Queste cose rammento
A voi piangendo, o prole
D' Eroi, di Regi gloriosa e grande:
E se nel mio lamento
Scarse son le parole,
Lagrime larghe il mio dolor vi spande:
Cetre, trombe, ghirlande,
Misero piango, e piango
Studj, diporti, ed agi,
Mense, logge, e palagi,
Ov' or fui nobil servo, ed or compagno
Libertade, e salute,
E leggi oimè! d'umanità perdute.
Da' nipoti d'Adamo,
Oimè! chi mi divide?
O qual Circe mi spinge infra la gregge?
Oimè! che in tronco o in ramo
Augel vien, che s'annide,

No. XXIV.

E fera in tana ancor con miglior legge.
Lor la Natura regge:
E pure, e dolci, e fresche
Lor porge l'acque il fonte:
E'l prato, e'l colle, e'l monte
Non infette, salubri, e facil esche:
E'l ciel libero, e l'aura
Lor luce, e spira, e lor scalda, e ristaura,
Merto le pene; errai
Errai, confesso, e pure
Rea fu la lingua, il cor si scusa, e nega:
Chiedo pietade omai
E s'alle mie sventure
Non vi piegate voi, chi lor si piega?
Lasso! chi per me prega
Nelle fortune avverse,
Se voi mi sete sorde?
Deh, se voler discorde
In sì grand'uopo mio vi fa diverse,
In me fra voi l'esempio
Di Mezio si rinnovi e'l duro scempio.
Quell' armonìa sì nova
Di virtù, che vi face
Sì belle, or bei per me faccia concenti,
Si ch'a pietà commova
Quel Signor, per cui spiace
Più la mia colpa a me, che i miei tormenti,
Lasso! benchè cocenti;
Ond' a tanti, e sì egregi
Titoli di sue glorie,
A tante sue vittorie,
A tanti suoi trofei, tanti suoi fregi,
Questo s'aggiunga ancora,
Perdono a chi l'offese, ed or l'adora.
Canzone, virtute è là, dov'io t'invio:
Meco non è fortuna,
Se fè non hai, non hai tu scorta alcuna.

* I shall subjoin to these canzoni, a very beautiful sonnet on the same subject, addressed to the Spirit of Hercules II., Duke of Ferrara.

No. XXIV.

Alma grande d'Alcide, Io so, che miri
L'aspro rigor della Real tua prole,
Che con insolite arti, atti, e parole,
Trar da me cerca, onde ver me s'ardiri.
Dal gran cerchio di latte, ove ti giri
Sovra l'erranti stelle, e sovra il Sole,
Un messagier di tua pietà s'en vole,
E spirto in lor d'umanitade inspiri.
E suoni sovra il cor " perchè traligni
Da me, mio sangue? e perchè sì discordi
Da quel valor, onde ten vai sì altero?
Tu clemente, tu giusto! al dritto, al vero,
A' messaggi del Cielo aver vuoi sordi
Gli orecchi sempre, ed al cantar de' Cigni?" *

No. XXV.—P. 69.

OF JAMES CRICHTON.

No. XXV.

The following article relative to the talents and murder of James Crichton, commonly called the *Admirable Crichton*, will (from my having failed in obtaining some books, which I expected should have thrown light on the subject,) be much more imperfect than I had reason to hope. It is greatly to be wished that some Italian antiquary would explore the circumstances of the young Scotsman's death, a subject which implicates so deeply the character of Vincenzo di Gonzaga, a person of such consequence in the literary history of Italy.

In investigating the story of James Crichton, it is of considerable importance to fix with accuracy the date of his birth, and that of his death. Accord-

* This sonnet is printed in the second part of the *Rime et Prose*, of Tasso, p. 6, published while he was in St Anne's, *In Ferrara, Appresso Giulio Vasalini in cortile di sua Altezza*, 1585. Had the idea in Ferrara been, that Tasso was inhumanly treated, it is doubtful if any one would have dared to publish such a sonnet as the above, under the very eye of a prince so despotic as Alphonso.

No. XXV. ing to a very general account, he was born in 1551, and at the time of his murder was in his thirty-second year.* Imperialis, however, asserts that his death happened in the twenty-second year of his age,† a circumstance rendered probable by the dedication of Aldus Manutius, who inscribes his *Paradoxa Ciceronis*, to Crichton. In this dedication, which is dated Venetiis XIV. Kal. Jun. M.D.XXCI. [1581,] Aldus says, "decem linguarum, multorum idiomatum, omnium disciplinarum cognitionem, ante *vigesimum primum* ætatis annum sis adeptus." Boccalini, who resided in Rome, while Crichton was in Italy, calls him a youth of twenty-five years,‡ all which circumstances render it probable, that the birth of Crichton is to be placed about 1560.

A similar conclusion may perhaps be drawn, from the following letter of the late Professor Rotheram of St Andrews. My distinguished friend Lord Woodhouselee, wrote, in January 1798, to that gentleman, requesting him to examine the records of the university of St Andrews, if the name of James Crichton is to be found in them. That Crichton had studied at St Andrews is asserted by his biographers, and appears from the names of his masters, enumerated by Aldus.‖ John Rutherford is stated to be one of these, a person who was Professor of Philosophy at St Andrews, and died there in 1577.

The following is the letter of Professor Rotheram to Lord Wooodhouselee, by whom it was communicated to me. It is dated St Andrews, January 31, 1798.

"Immediately on receiving your letter, yesterday, I went to search the university register, which is very entire from the [year] 1470. It is a well preserved book, with parchment leaves, and distinct hand writing. It contains for each year, the elections of the Rector, of the Decanus Facultatis artium, of the Quæstor, and other officers, and then follow three columns intituled *Noia In-*

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* Mackenzie's *Writers of the Scots Nation*, vol. III. p. 198. Pennant's *Tour*, vol. I. p. 313.

† *Musæum Historicum*, p. 243. Ed. 1640.

‡ Giovane di venticinque. *Ragguagli di Parnasso*, 40.

‖ Maximos hujus tempestatis viros, Buchananum, Hepburnium, Robertonium, et Rhetorfortem præceptores tibi [pater] dederit.

corporatorum Col. Mariæ.... Col. Leonard.... Coll. Servatoriani. In the year 1570, in the column intitled *Nomina Incorporatorum Col. Servatoriani,* I find *Jacobus Crychtonus*—so that you may be assured that he was matriculated in St Salvator's college, in the month of November, 1570. I examined the register of degrees, (which is also a fair-kept book, very distinctly written,) viz. to, and with the year 1582, to see if I could find whether he graduated or no. But his name does not occur in any of the lists, either of Art. Bacc. or Art. Magr. No. XXV.

"Buchanan was regent of St Leonard's college in the years 1566, 1567, 1568, 1569.* His name does not appear either in the register of the University, or in the register of the Faculty of Arts, after 1569—nor is any mention made in these registers, when he left the university.

"I wish I could have been able to assist you any farther in this matter. Perhaps if you were here yourself, you might expiscate something farther."

It is in a high degree probable, that this *Jacobus Crychtonus,* was none other than the *Admirable Crichton.* If Crichton was born in 1560, he must have been in his eleventh year, (or at least have nearly concluded his tenth,) in November, 1570. Young men in Scotland, go when mere boys to college, generally in their eleventh or twelfth year, and so forward a youth as Crichton, would be sent very early. There are thus strong grounds for believing that he was born about 1560, and died in his twenty-second year; for, according to the other account, he must have only entered college, after completing his nineteenth year.*

With regard to the date of Crichton's death, this is left equally indefinite, and it is a circumstance still more to be attended to than that of his birth. One of the best means of exculpating Vincenzo, if he can indeed be exculpated, is by proving an *alibi,* and this cannot be done, if the date of Crichton's death is left indeterminate. Thomas Dempster, a Scotsman, who was a pro-

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* Buchanan was matriculated in the university of St Andrews, when he had completed his eighteenth year, but he had been sent to study in Paris, at the age of fourteen. Irving's *Life of Buchanan,* pp. 5, 8.

No. XXV.

fessor, first at Pisa, and afterwards at Bologna, (where he died in 1625,) merely says, in his account of Crichton, that he lived in 1581.* Imperialis tells us, [p. 243,] that Crichton was killed, *V. Non. Quinct.* anno 1583. The greater number of Crichton's biographers, affirm with Imperialis that it was on the third of July 1583, and they generally add that it was during the carnival, which, however, is in the beginning of Lent.

That Crichton was killed, *V. Non Quinct.* appears from the following paper communicated to me also, by Lord Woodhouselee, but it would thence appear that his death happened in 1582. It is entitled *Aldus Manuccius, to the memory of James Crichton.*—Unfortunately his Lordship does not recollect where the original may be found, or how he obtained it.

"O Crichton, it is just that praise should attend thy memory, since we have been deprived of thee by an untimely death. Who is there that did not admire thee in life? who that does not mourn thee dead?... While alive, the judgement I had formed of thy merits, was my honour and advantage; and now that thou art no more, my grief is immeasurable. Would to God thou wert yet alive, and that this fatal land (though the native country of Virgil,) had never possessed thee. For such has been our wretched destiny, that the same land which to him gave birth, should in this latter year deprive thee of life, (alas, in thy twenty-second year, a span of existence, though sufficient for thy glory, yet too short for us). For ever will I revere thy memory—for ever shall thy image be present to my eyes.—To me shalt thou ever be the same—ever cherished in my heart, as in the affections of all worthy men. God grant that thy lot above may be the consummation of heavenly felicity, as on earth thou wert ever attached to what was of heavenly origin, and ever employed in the contemplation of such objects. O melancholy day, the third

* Vixit anno M.D.LXXXI., a circumstance indeed evident, from the dedication of Aldus Manutius. Thinking it possible, that Dempster might use *Vixit*, in the sense of *vita cessit*, I looked at his notices of other persons, and soon found that he says of one, vixit anno M.CCCLX., *et ulterius*, which determines Dempster's use of the word. *His. Ecclesiast. Gentis Scotorum*, pp. 189, 395. The only person who places Crichton's death in 1581, is Dr John Johnston, who, in his Historical Inscriptions, upon the Scottish kings and heroes, says of him that he was *Mantuæ Ducis Mantuani filio cæsus.* 1581. *Delit. Poet. Scot.* p. 696.

of July. [*V. Non. Quinct.*] This, to thee I write, from this melancholy so- No. XXV.
journ on earth, to that heavenly habitation, with my earnest prayer for every blessing to thy Spirit." Venice IV. Non. Nov. M.DXXCIII.

The next thing to be attempted is to make a proper estimate of the talents of Crichton. Of the modern accounts, the greater number, indeed the whole, are chiefly taken from Sir Thomas Urquhart, of Cromarty, whose *Tracts* were published in 1652. From him, and him alone, have been derived the stories of Crichton's feats in Paris at the college of Navarre, of his killing a gladiator at Mantua, and of his exhibiting a masque, in the representation of which he himself acted fifteen different characters. I shall extract from this writer a long passage relative to the manner of Crichton's death, not only that the reader may be enabled to judge how far the testimony of Sir Thomas is to be admitted as evidence, but because it is so exquisitely ridiculous as to be altogether unparalleled in the records of literature.

After an admirably absurd account of Crichton's masque, and of the effects of his acting, Sir Thomas proceeds to tell us, that his hero, and at the same time a most beautiful young lady, his intended wife, and, *en attendant*, his mistress, stole from the theatre, and drove home to her house, in her coach and six. After giving orders that the doors should be made fast, and no one admitted during all that night, Crichton and the lady "joyntly went along a private passage, which led them to a lantern scalier, *whose each step was twelve foot long;* thence mounting up a paire of staires, they past through, and traversed above nine several rooms on a floor, before they reached her bed chamber.——The weather, (continues Sir Thomas,) being a little chill and coldish, they on a *blue velvet couch*, sate by one another, towards a *charcoale fire burning in a silver brasero*, whilst *in the next room adjacent thereto*, a *pretty little round table of cedar-wood*, was a covering for the supping of them two together: the cates prepared for them, and *a week before that time bespoke*, were of the choicest dainties."

Sir Thomas now becomes so indecent, that it is necessary to shift the scene. Of Crichton's mistress, the prince of Mantua (without knowing her to be such,) was secretly enamoured. It being now the carnival, on a Shrove Tuesday, at night, "at which time, (says our author,) it is in Italy very customary for men of great sobriety, modesty, and civil behaviour all the rest of the yeer,

No. XXV. to give themselves over on that day to all manner of riot, drunkenness and incontinency—the prince, for the space of five hours together, with all his attendants, had done nothing else but rant it, roar and roam from one tavern to another, with haut-bois, flutes, and trumpets; drinking healths, breaking glasses, tossing pots, tumbling in the kennel, and acting all the devisable feats of madness,—being ambitious to have a kiss of his mistress' hand, (for so, in that too frolic humour of his, he was pleased to call this young lady,) before he should go to bed; with nine gentlemen at his back, and four pages carrying wax tapers before him, comes to the place where Crichtoun, and the foresaid lady were, (though the prince knew nothing of Crichtoun's being there,) and knocks at the outer gate thereof. No answer is made at first, for the whole house was in profound silence.... the clapper is again up, and they rap with a flap, till a threefold clap makes the sound to rebound. With this the porter awakes, looks out at a lattice-window of his lodge, and seeing them all with masks and vizards on their faces, asked them what their desire was, or what it might be that moved them to come so late in such a disguise? the prince himself answered, that they were gentlemen desirous only to salute my lady; which courtesie, when obtained, they would forthwith begone." Upon this, the porter consults a page, who tells a waiting gentlewoman, who informs her mistress, who orders the page to go down, and by argument or entreaty prevail on the gentlemen to depart. Sir Thomas gives a prolix account of the reasonings used by the page, which I shall not transcribe or abridge, but proceed to the place where he again brings Crichton on the stage.

"After that the prince and *Pomponacio* (for so they called the page,) had thus for a long time together debated to and againe, the reasons for and against the intended visit, with so little success on either side, that the more artifice was used in the rhetorick, the less effect it had in the perswasion: the prince, unwilling to miss of his mark, and not having in all the quivers of his reason one shaft wherewith to hit it, resolved to interpose some authority with his argumentations, and where the foxes skin could not serve, to make use of lyons: to the prosecuting of which intent, he with his *vinomadefied* retinue, resolved to press in upon the page, and maugre his will, to get up staires, and take their fortune in the quest of the chamber they aimed at: for albeit the stradling as wide as he could, of pretty Pomponacio at the door whereat they

made account to force their passage, did for a while retard their designe, because of their chariness to struggle with so hopeful a youth, and tender imp of so great expectation, yet at last being loath to faile of their end, by how indirect means soever they might attain thereto, they were in the very action of crowning their violence with prevalency, when the admirable and ever-renowned Crichtoun, who at the prince's first manning of the court taking the alarm, step'd from the shrine of Venus, to the oracle of Pallas armata; and by the help of the waiting gentlewoman, having apparelled himself with a plaudamental vesture, after the antic fashion of the illustrious Romans, both for that he minded not to make himself then known, that to walk then in such like disguise was the anniversary customs of all that country, and that all both gentlemen and others standing in that court, were in their mascaradal garments; with his sword in his hand, like a messenger from the gods, came down to relieve the page from the post whereat he stood sentry; and when (as the light of the minor planets appears not before the glorious rays of Titan) he had obscured the irradiancy of Pomponacio with his more effulgent presence, and that under pretext of turning him to the page to desire him to stand behind him, as he did, he had exposed the full view of his left side (so far as the light of torches could make it perceivable) to the lookers on, who being all *in cuerpo* carrying swords in their hands instead of cloaks about them, imagined really, by the badge or cognizance they saw near his heart, that he was one of my ladies chief domestic servants: he addressed his discourse to the prince, and the nine gentlemen that were with him; neither of all whereof, as they were accoutred, was he able (either by the light of the tapers, or that of the moon, which was then but in the first week of its waxing, it being the Tuesday next to the first new moon that followed the purification day) to discern in any manner of way what they were; and for that he perceived by their unstedfast postures, that the influence of the grape had made them subjects to Bacchus, and that their extranean-like demeanour towards him (not without some amazement) did manifest his certainty of their not knowing him; he therefore with another kind of intonation (that his speech might not bewray him) then that which waited upon his usual note of utterance, made a pithy panegyrick in praise of those that endeavoured, by their good fellowship, and Bacchanalian compagniony, to

No. XXV.

No. XXV. cheer up their hearts with precious liquour, and renew the golden age; whence descending to a more particular application, he very much applauded the ten gentlemen, for their being pleased (out of their devotion to the Lyæan god, who had with great respect been bred and elevated amongst the nymphs) not to forget, amidst the most sacred plying of their symposiasms, that dutie to ladies which was incumbent on them to be performed in the discharge of a visite: then wheeling neatly about to fetch another careere, he discreetly represented to them all the necessary circumstances at such a visit observable, and how the infringing of the meanest title or particle of any one thereof, would quite disconcert the mutual harmony it should produce, and bring an unspeakable disparagement to the credits and honours of all guilty of the like delinquency. In amplifying hereof, and working upon their passions, he let go so many secret springs, and inward resorts of eloquence, that being all perswaded of the unseasonableness of the time, and unreasonableness of the suit, none of them, for a thousand ducats that night, would have adventured to make any further progress in that affair, for which a little before they had been so eager: so profound was the character of reverence toward that lady, which he so insinuatingly had imprinted into the hearts of them all; wherefore they purposing to insist no longer upon the visitatory design, did cast their minds on a sudden upon another far more hair-brained consideration; when the prince, to one of his chief gentlemen said, we will do this good fellow no wrong; yet before we go hence, let us try what courage is in him, that after we have made him flee for it, we may to-morrow make one excuse for all, to the lady whom he serveth. Do not you see (says he) how he dandleth the sword in his hand, as if he were about to braveer us, and how he is decked and trimmed up in his cloaths, like another Hector of Troy, but I doubt, if he be so martial, he speaks too well to be valiant: he is certainly more mercurial then military; therefore let us make him turn his back, that we may spie if, as another Mercury, he hath any wings on his heels. This foolish chat no sooner was blattered out to the ears of three of his gentlemen, that were nearest to him, but the sudden drawing of their swords, though but in jest, made the other six, who heard not the prince, as if they had been mad, to adventure the rashness wherewith the spirit of wine had inspired them, against the prudensequal and invincible fortitude of the

matchless Crichtoun; who, not being accustomed to turn his back to those that had any project against his breast, most manfully sustained their encounter; which (although furious at first) appearing nevertheless unto him (because of the odds of ten to one) not to have been in earnest, he for twenty several bouts, did but ward their blows, and pary with the fort of his sword, till by plying the defensive part too long, he had received one thrust in the thigh, and another in the arm; the trickling of his blood from the wounds whereof, prompted his heroick spirit (as at a desperate stake to have at all or none) to make his tith outvy their stock, and set upon them all: in which resolution, when from the door whereat he stood, he had launched forth three paces in the court, (having lovely Pomponacio behind him, to give him warning in case of surprisal in the reer, and all his ten adversaries in a front before him, who, making above a quadrant of that periphery whereof his body was the centre, were about, from the exterior points of all their right shoulder-blades, alongst the additional line of their arms and tucks, to lodge home in him so many truculent semi-diameters) he retrograding their intention, and beginning his agency, where they would have made him a patient, in as short a space as the most diagrammatically-skilled hand, could have been able to describe lines representative of the distance 'twixt the earth and the several *kardagas*, or horary expeditions of the sun's diurnal motion, from his *æquinoxial horizontality* to the top of his meridian height (which, with the help of a ruler by six draughts of a pen, is quickly delineated) livered out six several thrusts against them, by vertue whereof, he made such speedy work upon the respective segments of that debauch'd circumference, through the red-inmarks, which his streight-drawn stroaks imprinted, that being alonged from the centre-point of his own courage, and with a thunder-bolt-like-swiftness of hand radiated upon their bodies, he discussed a whole *quadrant* of those ten, whereof four and twenty make the circle; and laying six of the most inraged of them on their backs, left (in the other four) but a *sextant* of the aforesaid ring, to avenge the death of their dismal associates. Of which quaternity, the prince (being most concerned in the effects of this disaster, as being the only cause thereof (though his intentions levelled at another issue) and like to burst with shame to see himself loadned on all sides with so much dishonour, by the incomparable valour of one single man,) did set forward at the swords

No. XXV.

No. XXV. point, to essay if in his person so much lost credit might be recovered, and to that purpose coming within distance, was upon the advancing of a thrust in quart; when the most agil Crichtoun parying it in the same ward, smoothly glided along the prince's sword, and being master of its feeble, was upon the very instant of making his highness very low, and laying his honour in the dust, when one of the three courtiers whom fortune had favoured not to fall by the hand of Crichtoun, cried aloud, *hold, hold, kill not the prince:* at which words the courteous Crichtoun recoyling, and putting himself out of distance, the prince pulled off his vizard, and throwin it away, shew'd his face so fully, that the noble-hearted Crichtoun, being sensible of his mistake, and sorry so many of the prince's servants should have enforced him, in his own defence, to become the actor of their destruction, made unto the prince a very low obeisance; and setting his left knee to the ground (as if he had been to receive the honour of knight-hood) with his right hand presented him the hilt of his own conquering sword, with the point thereof towards his own breast, wishing his highness to excuse his not knowing him in that disguise, and to be pleased to pardon what unluckily had ensued upon the necessity of his defending himself, which (at such an exigent) might have befallen to any other, that were not minded to abandon their lives to the indiscretion of others. The prince, in the throne of whose judgement the rebellious vapours of the tun had installed Nemesis, and caused the irascible faculty shake off the soveraignty of reason, being without himself, and unable to restraine the impetuosity of the wills first motion, runs Crichtoun through the heart with his own sword, and kills him: in the interim of which lamentable accident, the sweet and beautiful lady (who by this time had slipped herself into a cloth-of-gold petticoat, in the anterior fente whereof was an asteristick pouch, wherein were inchased fifteen several diamonds, representative of the constellation of the primest stars in the signe of Virgo; had enriched a tissue gown and wastecoat of brocado with the precious treasure of her ivory body; and put the foot-stalls of those marble pillars which did support her microcosme, into a paire of incarnation velvet slippers embroidered with purple) being descended to the lower door (which jetted out to the court-wards) where Pomponacio was standing, with the curled tresses of her dischevelled hair dangling over her shoulders, by the love-knots of whose naturally-guild-

ed filaments were made fast the hearts of many gallant sparks, who, from their liberty of rangeing after other beauties, were more forcibly curbed by those capillary fetters, than by so many chains of iron; and in the dædalian windings of the crisped pleats whereof, did lye in ambush a whole brigade of Paphian archers, to bring the loftiest martialists to stoop to the shrine of Cupid; and, (Arachne like, now careering, now caracoling it alongst the Polygonal plainness of its twisted threads) seaze on the affections of all whose looks should be involved in her locks; and, with a presentation exposing to the beholders all the perfections that ever yet were by the Graces conferred on the female sexe, all the excellencies of Juno, Venus, and Minerva; the other feminean deities, and semi-goddesses of former ages, seeming to be of new revived, and within her compiled, as the compactedst abridgement of all their best endowments; stepped a pace or two into the court, (with all the celerity that the intermixed passions of love and indignation was able to prompt her to: during which time, which certainly was very short, because, to the motions of her angelically-composed body, the quantity attending the matter of its constitution was no more obstructive, then were the various exquisite qualities flowing from the form thereof, wherein there was no blemish) the eyes of the prince's thoughts, and those were with him (for the influences of Cupid are like the actions of generation, which are said to be *in instanti*) pryed into, spyed, and surveyed from the top of that sublimely framed head, which culminated her accomplishments, down along the wonderful symmetry of her divinely-proportioned countenance; from the glorious light of two luminaries, Apollo might have borrowed rayes to court his Daphne, and Diana her Endymion: even to the rubies of those lips, where two Cupids still were kissing one another for joy of being so near the enjoyment of her two rows of pearles inclosed within them; and from thence through the most graceful objects of all her intermediate parts, to the heaven-like polished prominences of her mellifluent and heroinal breast, whose porphyr streaks (like arches of the ecliptick and colures, or azimuch and almicantar-circles intersecting other) expansed in pretty veinelets (through whose sweet conduits run the delicious streams of Nectar, wherewith were cherished the pretty sucklings of the Cyprian goddesse) smiled on one another to see their courses regulated by the two niple-poles above them elevated, in each their own

No. XXV.

No. XXV. hemisphere; whose magnetic vertue, by attracting hearts, and sympathy in their refocillation, had a more impowering ascendent over poetic lovers, for furnishing their braines with choise of fancy, then ever had the two tops of Parnassus-hill, when animated or assisted by all the wits of the Pierian muses.** All this from their imagination being conveyed into the penitissim corners of their souls in that short space which I have already told, she rending her garments, and tearing her hair, like one of the Graces possest with a fury, spoke thus: "O villains! what have you done? you vipers of men, that have thus basely slain the vailiant Crichtoun, the sword of his own sexe, and buckler of ours, the glory of this age, and restorer of the lost honour of the court of Mantua: O Crichtoun, Crichtoun!", At which last words, the prince hearing them uttered by the lady in the world he loved best, and of the man in the world he most affected, was suddenly seized upon by such extremity of sorrow for the unhappiness of that lamentable mischance, that, not being able to sustaine the rays of that beauty, whose piercing aspect made him conscious of his guilt, he fell flat upon his face like to a dead man: but knowing *omne simile* not to be *idem*, he quickly arose; and, to make his body what it appeared, fixed the hilt of the sword wherewith he had killed Crichtoun, fast betwixt two stones, at the foot of a marble statue standing in the court, (after the fashion of those staves with iron pikes at both ends, (commonly called *Swedish feathers*, when stuck into the ground to fence musketeers from the charge of horse) then having recoyled a little from it, was fetching a race to run his breast (which for that purpose he had made open) upon the point thereof, (as did Cato Uticensis after his lost hopes of the recovery of the commonwealth of Rome) and assuredly (according to that his intent) had made a speedy end of himself, but that his three gentlemen (one by stopping him in his course, another by laying hold on him by the middle, and the third by taking away the sword) hindered the desperate project of that autochthony. The prince being carried away in that mad, frantic, and distracted humour (befitting a bedlam better then a serralio) into his own palace, where all manner of edge-tools were kept from him all that sad night, for fear of executing his former designe of self-murder: as soon as to his father my lord duke on the next morning by seven o'clock, (which, by the usual computation of that country, came at that season of the yeer to be near up-

No. XXV.

on fourteen hours, or fourteen o'clock) the story of the former night's tragedy was related, and that he had solemnly vowed he should either have his son hanged, or his head struck off, for the committing of a so ingrate, enormous, and detestable crime; one of his courtiers told him, that (by all appearance) his son would save his highness' justice à labour, and give it nothing to do; for that he was like to hang himself, or after some other manner of way to turn his own *Atropos*. The whole court wore mourning for him full three quarters of a yeer together: his funeral was very stately, and on his hearse were stuck more epitaphs, elegies, threnodies, and epicediums, then, if digested into one book, would have out-bulk't all Homer's works; some of them being couched in such exquisite and fine Latin, that you would have thought great Virgil, and Baptista Mantuanus, for the love of their mother-city, had quit the Elysian fields to grace his obsequies: and other of them (besides what was done in other languages) composed in so neat Italian, and so purely fancied, as if Ariosto, Dante, Petrark, and Bembo had been purposely resuscitated, to stretch even to the utmost, their poetic vein, to the honour of this brave man; whose picture till this hour is to be seen in the bed-chambers or galleries of the most of the great men of that nation, representing him on horse-back, with a lance in one hand, and a book in the other: and most of the young ladies likewise, that were any thing handsome, in a memorial of his worth, had his effigies in a little oval tablet of gold, hanging 'twixt their breasts; (and held, for many years together, that Metamazion, or intermammilary ornament, as a necessary outward pendicle for the better setting forth of their accoutrements, as either fan, watch, or stomacher.) My lord duke, upon the young lady that was Crichtoun's mistress, and future wife (although she had good rents and revenues of her own by inheritance) was pleased to confer a pension of five hundred ducats a yeer: the prince also bestowed as much on her, during all the days of his life, which was but short; for he did not long enjoy himself after the cross fate of so miserable an accident. The sweet lady (like a turtle bewailing the loss of her mate) spent all the rest of her time in a continual solitariness; and resolved, as none before Crichtoun had the possession of her body, that no man breathing should enjoy it after his decease.

No. XXV. "The verity of this story I have here related concerning this incomparable Crichtoun, may be certified by above two thousand men yet living, who have known him; and truely of his acquaintance there had been a far greater number, but that before he was full 32 yeers of age, he was killed, as you have heard. And here I put an end to the admirable Scot."*

It is evident from the long passage which I have now extracted, that no one can listen to the testimony of Sir Thomas Urquhart, except he is either himself willing to be deceived, or to deceive others; especially, as wherever that testimony can be compared with history it is found to be false. "He says that the Duke of Mantua was pleased to confer upon the young lady, that was Crichton's mistress and future wife, a pension of five hundred ducats a year, and that the prince also bestowed as much upon her, during all the days of his life, 'which was, adds Sir Thomas, but short, for he did not long enjoy himself after the cross fate of so miserable an accident.' Now it is well known that Vincenzo di Gonzaga succeeded his father in the dukedom of Mantua in the year 1587, and that he did not die till the year 1612, which was almost, if not entirely, thirty years after Crichton's decease. The other instance of the imprudence of Sir Thomas Urquhart, in the contrivance of his fictions, occurs at the conclusion of his narrative, where he asserts that the verity of the story, which he hath related concerning the incomparable Crichton, 'may be certified by two thousand men yet living, who have known him.' *Two thousand men yet living!* that is in 1652, sixty-nine or seventy years after Crichton's death, for such was the time of Sir Thomas's publication. Our author would have been sadly puzzled to collect together these two thousand living witnesses, who could verify the verity of his story." †

Whatever, therefore, depends on the mere authority of Sir Thomas Urquhart; the marvellous exhibitions of Crichton at Paris; his combat with the Gladiator; his masque in which he represented fifteen different characters;

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* *Tracts.—The Jewel*, p. 87. *et seq.*—Ed. 1774.

† Kippis' *Biographia Britannica*, Art. CRICHTON. I am informed by Lord Woodhouselee, that the "respectable and learned gentleman of North Britain," to whose "hints and communications" the doctor confesses himself indebted in writing that article, was the late Lord Hailes.

and the nine months mourning for him at the court of Mantua, are to be regarded as absolute fictions.* Mackenzie imagined he had found a confirmation of Crichton's feats at Paris in the *Disquisitions* of Stephen Pasquier, a notion of which the fallacy has been clearly exposed in the following letter, first published in the Edinburgh Magazine, for May 1787. No. XXV.

Sir,

"We are informed by Sir John Hawkins, that Dr Johnson dictated from memory, that account of the person, vulgarly named the *Admirable Crichton*, which is to be found in one of the papers of the *Adventurer*, (No. 81.)

"That account is plainly an abridgement of the life of Crichton by Dr George M'Kenzie. Dr M'Kenzie supposes, that Pasquier the French lawyer and antiquary, was an eye-witness of the feats performed in arts, as well as arms, by Crichton.

"This is one of the grossest errors in biography which has occurred to me in the course of my reading; and it is an error which I perceive is gaining ground daily, and bids fair, in a short time, to be received as an indisputable truth.

"The error seems to have arisen from the following circumstance: Dr M'Kenzie had never read the original work of Pasquier, entitled, *Recherche de la France*; what he quotes concerning *the wonderful young man*, is taken from a Latin abridgement of that work; he refers to *Steph. Pasq. Disquis. lib. V. cap.* 23. and he gives his quotation in Latin; indeed, it does not appear that Dr M'Kenzie had ever heard of the original work.

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* To the absurd list which Dempster gives of Crichton's *Works*, (which, except a few poems, are nothing more than the titles of the subjects upon which he disputed or declaimed) Mackenzie has upon the authority of Sir Thomas Urquhart, added *a comedy in the Italian language*. According to Sir Thomas, however, this was not a comedy, (as there was no actor but Crichton) but a successive representation of fifteen different characters, so that, says Sir Thomas, "*you would have taken it* for a comedy of five acts, consisting of three scenes." The words seem to have been extempore, and the principal thing was the "flourish of mimic, and ethopoetic gestures," with which, and the excellence of his conceits, he, according to the Baronet, delighted and ravished those present for five hours successively.

No. XXV. "Now, Pasquier, instead of saying, that he was an eye-witness of the wonders exhibited by Crichton, says in the most unequivocal terms, that what he relates was taken 'from a MS. which was occasionally used by him,' *(d'un livre ecrit à la main, dont je m'aide selon les occurrences.)* And he adds, 'I will represent the story in its own simple garb, without any artificial colouring, so that my readers may be the more inclined to give credit to it,' (*vous representant cette Histoire en sa simplicité sans y apporter aucun fard pour ce que vous y adjousterez plus de foy.*) He then transcribes the narrative from the MS. which places the appearance of this phenomenon in the year *one thousand four hundred and forty-five*, a full century before the birth of our Crichton. See *Recherches de la France*, lib. VI. c. 38, 39.

"Dr M'Kenzie, although he had not read the original of Pasquier, appears to have read an author who quotes the same story. 'The learned M. du 'Launoy,' says he, 'in his history of the College of Navarre, finding the history 'of this dispute recorded in a MS. history of the college of Navarre, and the 'like account of a Spaniard in Trithemius, confounds the two together, and '*robs* our author of the glory of this action, and places it in the year 1445, 'whereas it should be in the year 1571.' This charge of *robbery* is singular enough!

"Let me only add, that Pasquier transcribes some verses written by George Chastelain a French poet, in the reign of Charles VII. king of France, which allude to the same story; and that Pasquier himself was born at Paris in 1528, passed his life in that city, and was an eminent lawyer and pleader in 1571, so that it is impossible the feats of Crichton, had they been really performed at Paris, could have been unknown to him, and most improbable that, knowing them, he would have omitted to mention them; for in the same lib. VI. c. 39, he is at pains to produce examples of great proficiency, displayed by men in a much humbler rank of life, than that of philosophers and public disputants."—I am, &c.

"It may farther be observed, says Dr Kippis, who quotes the above letter, that Thuanus, who was likewise a contemporary, and who in his own life is very particular in what relates to learned men, makes no mention of Crichton. The only authority for his having ever resided in France at all, (Sir Thomas

Urquhart excepted) is that of Dr John Johnston, who says *Gallia pectus excolit*. But this amounts to no proof of the truth of the transactions related by Urquhart. The whole which can be deduced from it is, that Crichton in the course of his travels, might make some stay in France for the purpose of improvement. Even this, however, doth not agree with the narration of Imperialis, who informs us, that when troubles arose in Scotland on account of religion, and Queen Mary fell into so many calamities, Crichton was sent by his father directly from that country to Venice, as a place of security." * No. XXV

Imperialis is another of the witnesses adduced in evidence of Crichton's endowments, and with as little propriety as Sir Thomas Urquhart. His work is a collection of heads, with short eulogies, in which almost every person is represented as a Phœnix; and a mass of pompous epithets are heaped together less for the purpose of celebrating the person, than showing the eloquence of the author. In Italy, a number of such encomiastic works have been published, as besides that of Imperialis, those of Crasso, Ghilini, Capaccio, and others, useless for every biographical purpose, and containing the most absurd and ridiculous panegyric.† Of the taste of the Italians in this way, we have a specimen in Carlo Dati's address to Milton, published at the beginning of the latter's Latin poems, and of which the following is the translation of Cowper.

To John Milton, a youth—" in whose memory the whole world is treasured; in whose intellect wisdom; in whose heart the ardent desire of glory; and in whose mouth eloquence. Who with astronomy for his conductor,

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* *Musaeum Historicum*, p. 140. Sir Thomas Urquhart, after narrating Crichton's exploits at Paris, says, " he on a sudden took resolution to leave the court of France, and return to Italy, where he had been bred for many years together;" and speaking of his combat at Mantua, he says, " Crichtoun, to wipe off the imputation of cowardice lying upon the court of Mantua, to which he had but even then arrived, (although, formerly he had been a domestic thereof,)" &c. In his *ad urbem Venetam appulsum*, addressed to Aldus Manutius, Crichton deplores the ravages of the pestilence, which, if it be the same mentioned in vol. I. pp. 246, 250, would place his going thither at an early period.

† Sono opere (says Tiraboschi,) le quali deludono communemente l'erudita curiosità; perciocchè ove si spera di trovar presso loro sicure ed esatte notizie de' dotti a' loro tempi vissuti, altro non vi si legge, che vuoti e pomposi elogj, che invece d'instruire stancano e annojano i leggitori. *Storia*, &c. tom. VIII. p. 279.

No. XXV. hears the music of the spheres: with philosophy for his teacher, decyphers the hand writing of God in those wonders of creation which proclaim his greatness, and with the most unwearied literary industry for his associate,

Examines, restores, penetrates with ease the obscurities of antiquity, the desolations of ages, and the labyrinths of learning,

"But wherefore toil to reach those arduous heights."

To him, in short, whose virtues the mouths of Fame are too few to celebrate, and whom astonishment forbids us to praise as he deserves."*

Of such fustian as this, the Eulogy of Imperialis, (who published his *Musæum Historicum*, in 1540, nearly sixty years after the death of Crichton,) consists. The information of Imperialis seems to have been wholly derived from a dedication (by and bye to be quoted,) of Aldus Manutius, whose very expressions he adopts. He adds, indeed, that his own father had heard Crichton dispute with the celebrated philosopher Arcangelus Mercenarius, at Padua.† "Imperialis, the elder, (says Dr Kippis, or Lord Hailes,) was not born till 1568, and consequently was only thirteen years old when Crichton displayed his talents at Padua. What real dependence, therefore, could there be on the accuracy of the account given by a youth of that age? he could only narrate, and perhaps from inadequate intelligence, the things which were talked of when he was a boy. Besides, his authority is appealed to for no more than a single fact, and that a doubtful one, since it does not accord with Manutius's narrative: and who ever heard of the famous philosopher Arcangelus Mercenarius?"

That Crichton had a syllogistic conflict with Arcangelus Mercenarius at

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* Cowper's *Latin and Italian Poems of Milton translated*, p. 8. I have often wondered that Milton condescended to publish the silly and fulsome panegyrics of his Italian friends.

† Mihi quidem ex patris mei, qui ipsum audiit, sermonibus agnitum, ex Doctoribus unum, interriti spiritus acie, Arcangelum Mercenarium, insignem philosophum, cum Critonio de Rebus Physicis copiosé graviterque disseruisse, impugnando, resolvendo, interpretando subtiliter, ac prompté singula; qui propterea perhonorificum lectissimæ Coronae, ac vel ipsius disceptatoris indicium est emeritus.

Padua, is extremely probable, for it is very certain that there was such a person,* and he seems to have taken pleasure in being employed to oppugn the forward and disputatious boys, who were so numerous at that period. "He set out for Padua, (says Erythraeus, in his account of Mazzoni,) as to the mart of all good arts, where he attended the lessons of Pendasio, and Panciroli, the two most distinguished professors of philosophy and of law. How much he

No. XXV.

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* I have at present, lying before me, a quarto volume, most beautifully printed in the Italic character, entitled *Dilucidationes Arcangeli Mercenarii A Monte Sancto Philosophiam in Patavino Gymnasio Profitentis, in plurima Aristotelis perobscura, & nonnulla Averrois loca—ad Illustrissimum et Reverendiss. D. D. Felicem Peretum a Monte alto S. R. E. Cardinalem amplissimum.* The dedication to the Cardinal, [afterwards Sixtus V.] is dated *Patavii Prid. nonas April.* M.D.LXXIIII., and the book is printed the same year, *Venetiis apud Paulum, & Antonium Meietos, Fratres.*

This work is full of Latin quotations, from Aristotle, Averroes, and his other commentators, and abounds in dissertations on act, power, form, substance, quiddity, and entity. Though this species of books be, in general, not very intelligible, I must fairly award the palm of obscurity to Arcangelus, over all the authors whose writings I have met with, as in most of these, one has at least some kind of idea of the subject which is proposed for discussion. This, however, is not the case with those *Dilucidations* of Mercenarius, from which, as it may have been the text book of the disputes between him and Crichton, I shall copy the titles of a few of the chapters.

1. Forma est subjectum Universalitatis, et iste est intellectus cujuslibet formae.
2. An materia Cœli potentia sit, an actu, exacta explanatio.
3. An Intelligentia sit forma dans esse corpori cœlesti.
4. Ex Intelligentia et orbe fit magis unum, quàm ex materia et forma, sed secundum dispositionem magis diminutam quàm sit unio recipientis, et recepti in forma abstracta.
5. Nutrimentum quando actu nutrit, et actu nutrimentum est.
6. In prima forma essentia ejus est quiditas ejus, in aliis verò essentia à quiditate quoquomodo diversa est.

Examining anxiously the table of contents for the purpose of discovering if there was any discussion, where I could form an idea of what was to be proved, I lighted upon the following problem, of which the enunciation is sufficiently clear. It is *whether an old man if he had a young man's eye, could see as a young man.* To the comfort of all such as find it necessary to pay court to unreasonable old men, Arcangelus seems to decide in the negative, and it may not be improper to set down his *ratio decidendi*, for the purpose of demonstrating to our aged relatives, who may wish for such an exchange, how little they have to expect from a freak of this kind: "adde quòd falsum esset, quod inquit philosophus, quòd si senex acciperet oculum et organum juvenis videret ut juvenis, quia si continue remittitur, igitur etiam si in senio acciperet organum juvenis, non eam operationem exerceret, [nec ita videret sicut potentia visiva juvenis, quae intensior est, itaque non solum anima rationàlis in indivisibili consistit, nec intensionem et remissionem subit, sed unaquaque forma substantialis."

No. XXV. profited may be learned from the testimony of Pendasio, who when oppugned by the philosopher Archangelus, (ab Archangelo Philosopho,) declared to the numbers who wished to defend his tenets, that he wanted no other champion than Mazzoni. His return from Padua happened in the twenty-second year of his age, after the exhibition of that first proof of his talents, awful to those who really knew him, but at which those who estimate the abilities of others from their own will laugh. For, from the writings of Aristotle and Plato, whose works he had most diligently read and committed to memory, he selected five thousand, one hundred, and ninety-seven tenets, which in a tract that he published, he proposed for controversy, offering to defend them against any opponent, to refel, refute, and overthrow their objections, and prove that Aristotle and Plato were wholly in the right.....He never (continues Erythraeus, after a farther account of Mazzoni's feats,) defended a subject which he did not prove, never attacked what he did not overcome. Witness a short and pithy argument, by which he compelled Torquato Tasso to confess that the poem of Ariosto is not multifold and various, but simple, and one."*

Rejecting, therefore, the *galimatias* of Sir Thomas Urquhart, and the fustian of Imperialis, (which besides is wholly derived from the dedication of Aldus, by and bye to be mentioned,) let us examine what contemporary writers say of Crichton. Felix Astolfo, in his *Officina Historica*, a book consisting of a vast number of little facts or anecdotes of a few lines each, taken from ancient or modern story, classed under chapters, and having subjoined to each anecdote, the name of the author on whose authority it rests, has in his cap. 19., under the title of *Memorosi Moderni*, or *Moderns with a great memory*, the

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* J. N. Erythraei *Pinacotheca*, I. 38. It is a pity that Mazzoni, (whose birth happened in 1548,) did not encounter Crichton, who appears to have taken the opposite side, professing to shew *errores Aristotelis pene innumerabiles.* Tiraboschi mentioning Mazzoni's disputations on every given subject for four successive days, adds that this was a proof rather of the temerity of Mazzoni, than of his learning, *cimento che pruova più la temerità che il sapere del Mazzoni*, and that his book shews an immense reading, but little discernment, *un'immensa lettura, ma insieme poco discernimento. Storia*, &c. Tom. VII. Part. I. p. 344.

Some information relative to Archangelus Mercenarius may probably be obtained from Serassi's *Life of Mazzoni*, which I have not been so fortunate as to procure. He is not named by Tiraboschi.

following passage. "The Scotsman is most notorious to all, (he was called James Crichton,) who like a marvellous prodigy, was admired in our times for his stupendous memory; he being a person, who though a youth of twenty-two years, penetrated the most recondite sciences, expounded obscure meanings, and the most difficult sentences of philosophers and theologians, so that to all who beheld his first down, it seemed impossible that he could have read so much, to say nothing of committing it to memory." *The Author.** No. XXV.

Another person adduced in evidence of Crichton's prodigious attainments, is Thomas Dempster, a Scotsman, who after residing in France, was professor of law, at Pisa, and afterwards of humanity, (for seven years,) at Bologna, where he died September 5th, 1625. As we are on the subject of memory, it may not be improper to adduce what Ghilini says of this writer, who considering his prowess, (much better attested than that of Crichton,†) and his erudition, needed only a panegyrist such as Sir Thomas Urquhart, who has procured for Crichton the name of *admirable*, to have obtained for him the title of the *wonderful* Dempster. "Nature," says Ghilini, "in addition to a most exquisite genius, which fitted him in the highest degree to obtain success in literature, had bestowed on him a super-human memory, in the perfection of which, he was unrivalled in our times. For no sooner was a book once read over in his hearing, than he would have recited it, and even a long time afterward, with the most faithful punctuality."‡

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* Lo Scozzese è notissimo à tutti (chiamavasi Giacopo Critonio,) il quale, quàsi per un mostro maraviglioso à tempi nostri fu ammirato per la sua stupenda memoria, si come quello, che penetrando, quantunque giovanetto di 22 anni per entro alle più recondite scienze, sponeva sensi oscuri, sentenze difficilissime di Filosofi e Teologi, si che a tutti quei che la sua prima lanugine guardavano, pareva impossibile, ch'egli leggere, non che mandare alla memoria havesse potuto tanto. *L'Auttore. Off. Hist.* p. 76. Venet. 1659. This is another testimony that Crichton died in his twenty-second year.

† See Bayle's *Dictionary*, Art. THOMAS DEMPSTER.

‡ La Natura li concesse oltre ad un esquisitissimo ingegno, attissimo à riuscire in ogni sorte di letteratura, una sovra humana memoria, non essendovi stato alcuno a' nostri tempi, che l'habbia nella perfezione di essa pareggiato; imperochè non così subito, et eziando doppo lungo tempo haverebbe una volta sola sentito a leggere un libro, come sarebbe stato da lui recitato con ogni fedel punctualità. *Teatro d'Uomini Letterati*, p. 234. I quote this as another specimen of Ita-

No. XXV. Dempster has rendered himself infamous among such literary men as know any thing of him, or of his writings, by his forgeries. "Thomas Dempster, (says M. Baillet,) nous a donné une Histoire Ecclésiastique d'Ecosse en 19 livres, ou il parle beaucoup de Gens de lettres de cette contrée. Mais quoi qu'il fut habille d'ailleurs, il n'en avoit ni le sens plus droit, ni le jugement plus solide, ni la conscience meilleure. Il eut voulu que tous les Savans fussent Ecossois, il a forgé des titres de livres qui n'ont jamais été mis au monde pour relever la gloire de sa patrie, et il a commis diverses autres fourbes qui l'ont décrié parmi les Gens de Lettres." * Indeed of Dempster's disposition to exaggerate, we have a proof in his article on Crichton, for at its conclusion, he represents Felix Astolfo, (of whom the whole testimony has been given in the preceding page,) as saying that Crichton had stored more books in his memory, than any other person of his age had read.

I shall here (as his work is rare,) adduce the whole that Dempster says of Crichton's genius. "James Crichton, born of the illustrious family of Cluny, after his education at his native Gymnasium, entered, as he was of a lively temper, into foreign service, but soon tiring of this, he withdrew to Italy, the asylum of learning and humanity.† Leaving Genoa, whither he had been invited, with a sufficiently ample honorary, he went to Venice, and there afforded such documents of his genius, and prodigiously stupendous memory, by a reading and judgement incredible for his age, that he was both vulgarly named, and was the miracle of the world. His propitious fame increasing, he was called thence

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lian panegyric.—On a plusieurs ouvrages de sa façon (says Mr Bayle, in speaking of Dempster,) c'etoit un homme de prodigieuse mémoire, infatigable au travail, chaud ami, et violent ennemi, il n'avoit beaucoup de jugement, ni beaucoup de bonne foi, car il publia sans pudeur Ie ne sai combien de fables.

* See in Bayle's *Dictionary*, Art. THOMAS DEMPSTER, the numerous writers, who have accused him of forgery and falsehood.

† If this statement of Dempster be just, it seems probable that Crichton was during some time in France. Had he gained any trophies there, however, we should have been told of them both by this writer, and by the panegyrical Aldus. Dempster, who while a professor at the college of Navarre in France, fought, we are told, a duel almost daily, says nothing of Crichton's prowess.

to direct the youth of the Prince of Mantua, by whom he was slain by night, No. XXV.
to the heavy grief, nor less indignation of the Duke his father, and to the greatest regret both of his own countrymen, and of the Italians, who at least are more impartial appraisers of the virtues. His chief friends were Lorenzo Massa secretary of the Venetians, Sperone Speroni, who eminently commends him in letters written to him,* Aldus Manutius who condescended to inscribe to him a *Commentary on the Paradoxes.* By the slanderous Trajan Boccalini alone, he has been harshly treated, but since in this man there is a prating scurrility, without any mixture of erudition, it is an honour to our Crichton to be abused by such a blockhead."†

After copying from Aldus Manutius, the Programma which Crichton published at Padua, containing his challenge to disputants, Dempster blames his countryman for boasting of royal descent, and the greatness of his family.‡ He then, after an enumeration of what he ridiculously calls Crich-

* Not having an opportunity of consulting Forcellini's edition of Sperone's works, I know not if they contain any letter of this writer, addressed to Crichton.

† Genua relicta, quâ honorario satis amplo invitatus fuerat, Venetias abiit, eaque ingenii sui, et ad portentum stupendae memoriae, incredibili ea etate lectione, et judicio, monimenta edidit, ut vulgo *miraculum orbis* et diceretur, et esset. Atque crebrescente secunda illa fama, inde evocatus Principis Mantuani juventuti praepositus, ab eodem noctu interfectus, gravi Ducis patris dolore, nec minore indignatione; summo vero sui, et apud cives suos, et Italos, saltem aequiores virtutum aestimatores desiderio relicto. Amicos habuit praecipuos Laurentium Massam Scriniarium Venetûm, Speronem Speronium qui egregiè eum in Epistolis commendat ad eum scriptis, Aldum Manutium, qui Paradoxôn Commentarium illi inscripsisse dignatus. Ab unico Trajano Boccalino maledicentissimo, male exceptus est, sed cùm in eo homine scurrilis dicacitas sine ulla eruditionis mixtura sit, honori erit Crichtonio nostro a tam imperito violari. *Hist. Eccles. Gentis Scotorum*, p. 187. This if we except the *miraculum orbis*, is sufficiently modest compared with modern eulogies, and this epithet seems to have been applied to Crichton, by Aldus only, who says, in his dedication, that he will recount what Crichton did in Venice, " hac urbe, totius orbis nobilissima, cujus amplitudinem, et augustissimam majestatem inter omnes alias civitates te accipere, fovere, atque amplecti decuit, te vero etiam *humani generis miraculum*, admirandam urbem incolere, amare, et omnibus aliis anteponere." Such absurd eulogy was frequent in the sixteenth century. Fateor (says Erasmus, speaking of Politian,) Angelum prorsus *Angelica fuisse mente, rarum Naturae Miraculum. In Cic.*

‡ It is evident that Crichton told an untruth to Aldus concerning his father's possessions. " Robertus Critonius, pater tuus, Fifensis in Scotia, et Stormondiensis, Elioki, et Clunaei, tot oppidorum, tot praesidiorum dominus." Aldus could only have learned the existence of such places

N°. XXV. ton's works, concludes thus, *vixit anno* 1581, *plures libros memoriter tenebat, quam quisquam ea aetate legerat.* Felix Astolfus in *officina Historica*, p. CII.

The meagre account which Dempster gives of Crichton is astonishing, if we consider the events of the life of the former of these writers as related by himself. Dempster was born in 1579, and being driven from his country by the misfortunes of his family, he, when a boy of eleven or twelve years, studied at Paris. A pestilential disease arising, to which he had almost fallen a victim, he retired to Flanders, and pursued his studies in the Scots college at Louvaine. William *Crichton* a Jesuit, principal of that college, sent him with three other Scottish youths to Rome, and at the close of 1597, or beginning of 1598, he was placed in a seminary of noble youths in that city, by the influence of Cardinal Cajetan, protector of the Scots. Losing his health, Dempster was advised to return to Flanders, and made a most laborious journey through Switzerland, in company with one Andrew *Crichton, quo Andrea Crichtonio comite, per Helvetios, laboriosissimo demum itinere, contendit.* † At length, before he was twenty-seven, he succeeded David Sinclair, as professor of canon law, in the *college of Navarre.* Thus we see, that Dempster followed the steps of Crichton, a very few years after the death of that reputed prodigy; was intimately acquainted with literary persons of his clan; was a professor for many years at Pisa and Bologna, and, after all, knew scarcely any thing concerning him. He seems to have been ignorant of the period of Crichton's death, and with all his disposition to fable and exaggeration, exemplified in this very case by his quotation from Astolfi, his panegyric is wonderfully moderate. In fact, all that he knew of Crichton's performances, he seems to have derived from the dedication of Aldus Manutius, the younger,

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from Crichton. Dempster adds, that he has been more severe in his censure of Crichton's boast of royal blood, " ut mortales intelligant, quam insipida sit quorundam nostratium adolescentium elatio, qui se vilescere apud exteros existimant, nisi speciosо Regii sanguinis titulo se commendaverint, quod vix unquam à verè nobili viro fieri animadverti."—One cannot help smiling at this, after reading in Bayle, that Dempster " étoit d'Ecosse, et il disoit, quand il fut passé en France, qu'il avoit quitté de grans biens en son pais à cause de la Religion Catholique. Il se piquoit aussi de grande Noblesse."

† *Hist. Ecclesiast. Gentis Scotorum*, p. 675.

prefixed to the *Paradoxa Ciceronis.* This dedication is the source from which all the persons, with the exception perhaps of Astolfo, who mention Crichton previous to Sir Thomas Urquhart, (whose admirable invention needed no assistance of any kind,) manifestly derived their information. It is the document principally dwelt on with triumph by the biographers of Crichton, as the record of the evidence of a living witness, with regard to that young Scotsman's philosophical and literary abilities, and exertions at Venice and Padua. Dr Kippis goes on pretty smoothly, till he comes to the dedication of Aldus, but his path here roughens, and he is evidently at a loss. The panegyric, indeed, contained in this dedication, is as high as the fondest admiration could pronounce. After an account of Crichton's family and education, Aldus proceeds thus, "but while yet a stripling to engage in the occupations of war, to continue them with zeal and fondness, and connect them, like another Brutus, with literature and philosophy, *has never happened except in yourself, since the origin of the human race.* These things are indeed great, *and till now unheard of,* yet they are moderate in comparison of what remains. You have attained before your twenty-first year, the knowledge of ten languages, of many idioms, of all learning; you have united the studies of fencing, of leaping, of riding, and of all gymnastic exercises with such alacrity of disposition, such humanity, mildness, and easiness of temper, that nothing can be more amiable or admirable."* Aldus then proceeds to state that Crichton had made a most eloquent speech before the Doge and senate; that he had disputed on the subjects of theology, philosophy, and mathematics, before the most eminent professors, and vast crowds of people who flocked to hear him; that during his residence at Venice, he fell into a bad state of health, which continued four months, and that before he was perfectly recovered,

No. XXV.

* Sed belli studia in ipsis ephebis inire, eadem animo atque amore prosequi, et cum literis, et Philosophia, tanquam alter Brutus, conjungere, nemini unquam ab initio humani generis obtigit. Magna sunt ista profecto, et inaudita; mediocria tamen si cetera spectemus. Quod scilicet decem linguarum, multorum Idiomatum, omnium disciplinarum cognitionem ante vigesimum primum aetatis annum sis adeptus, et digladiandi, saltandi, omnium gymnasticarum exercitationum, et equitandi studia, tanta cum alacritate ingenii, animique humanitate, mansuetudine, et facilitate conjunxeris, ut nihil te admirabilius, nihil etiam amabilius reperiri possit.

No. XXV. he went by the advice of his friends to Padua; that on the fourteenth of March, 1581, which was the day following his arrival, there was a meeting of almost all the learned of that city, in the house of Jacobus Aloysius Cornelius, when Crichton opened the assembly with an extemporary poem in praise of Padua. He then disputed for six hours with the most celebrated professors, upon various learned topics, and exposed in particular the errors of Aristotle, and his commentators, with such solidity and acuteness, and at the same time with so much modesty, that his hearers at once admired and loved him. The meeting closed with an extempore oration in praise of ignorance, so eloquent, that Aldus was informed by some who were present, that they thought they were in a dream. Aldus adds, that a day was appointed for another disputation to be held at the palace of the bishop of Padua, not for the purpose of affording a higher testimony of Crichton's talents, which it would have been in vain to attempt, but in compliance with the earnest solicitations of some persons, who were not present at the former meeting. Circumstances occurred which prevented this second contest, but as there were some envious persons who endeavoured to detract from his merit, Crichton both to gratify his friends, and to confound his opponents, caused a challenge to be fixed up in the city of Venice. In this he offered to refute almost innumerable errors of Aristotle, and of all the Latin philosophers, whether these latter followed that master, or treated of theological subjects. He promised likewise to refute the dreams of certain mathematical professors, to dispute in all the sciences; and to answer to whatever should be propounded to him, or objected against him. All this he engaged to do, either in the common logical way, or by numbers and mathematical figures, or in a hundred sorts of verse, at the pleasure of his opponents. The dispute was to begin on the day of Pentecost, after mid-day, in the church of St Peter and St Paul, and Aldus adds, that Crichton sustained this contest without fatigue for three days with such spirit and energy, that he obtained acclamations, than which, more magnificent were never heard by men. In this latter contest, Manutius represents himself both as an adviser and a witness.

It is to be remarked in the first place, that all this is contained in a dedication to Crichton himself, and that dedications in Italy, and in that age, always assumed a tone of the highest exaggeration. Crichton in his poem *De Appulsu*

suo Venetias, had celebrated Aldus in the most extravagant terms, and the learned bookseller (who confesses that he was *laudis semper avidissimus*,) was probably determined not to be inferior to him in the oblation of incense.* But what is of still more consequence; is the character of Aldus himself, who certainly had not attained in any degree that quality of admiring nothing, (*nil admirari*) which according to Horace, contributes so much to the happiness of life. On the contrary, no person seems to have been so frequently wonder-struck as the younger Aldus, and the stage of life appears to have always presented to him an opera where prodigies were continually passing and re-passing. No. XXV.

Of this disposition of Aldus Manutius, I shall furnish some very striking instances taken from a small volume of his letters, published at Rome, 1592, in 4to. Several of these are recommendatory ones, dated at Bologna on the tenth of January, 1586, and addressed to different cardinals, and great personages at Rome. Their purpose was to introduce one Stanislaus Niegossevio, a young Polish gentleman, who, like Crichton, was a literary adventurer, and going to Rome to give some specimen of his genius, *dare qualche saggio dell'ingegno suo*. The following are extracts from some of these epistles.

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* In the *Appulsus*, Crichton represents himself as overcome with melancholy at his past misfortunes, and especially as he knows no one in Venice, towards which he is approaching. The Naiad who converses with him, and consoles him, speaks as follows:—

Num te divini, divisque parentibus orti,
Aldi fama latet, totum diffusa per orbem?
Hunc Asiae gentes norunt, et Cantaber atrox,
Decolor atque Indus, vel qui colit incola terras
Extremas penitus, sive auro insignis Orion,
Sive Hyades pluviae, seu septem adversa Trioni
Sidera clara caput semper sublime coronant.
Huic (pharetra tantum insignis) crinitus Apollo
Se Tritoniaca confessus arundine victum,
Atque lyra cedit: nec se negat esse secundum,
Formosae natus Maiae: neque docta Minerva
Dedignata parem est: tantum nitet aurea virtus:
Hunc pete.....

No. XXV. To the Cardinal Farnese, Aldus writes—"There is going thither a gentleman, by nation a Pole, but worthy of all countries; a person so illustrious by infinite powerful talents, that he may be truly named *a prodigy in nature.* And if in the days of Leo, an Arch-poet made such a noise, (who, however, was not greater, but less perhaps than is reported, since *sometimes men in writing take pleasure in saying many falsehoods for the purpose of increasing praise,*) the present Pole—not merely Arch-poet, but king of poets—far surpasses both the effects of the past, and whatever opinions can be conceived either of himself, or of any of the highest favourites of the muses. I am certain that you will behold with an eye of regard the present *miracle of nature.*"*

To Cardinal Caraffa, Aldus writes,—"Signior Stanislaus Niegossevio, is going to Rome to make himself known in that city, and to give those specimens of his powers which he has displayed elsewhere, to the wonder of every one. I am certain that your lordship will hear him with the highest astonishment, *it being a thing out of nature, not only in the age in which we live, but in the ages that are past, to display those proofs of talents which he has exhibited, and which he is ready to exhibit. He is endued with qualities which are unspeakable, and, could they be uttered, incredible.*"†

Aldus writes to Cardinal Mondovi, that the Pole has a supernatural worth, *un valore sopranaturale,* and to Cardinal Caetano—"There is going to Rome *a miracle of nature, and more if one might say so*—a youth endowed so much beyond his years, that he who has not witnessed his powers, cannot but think

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* Vieni costì un Gentilhuomo per natione Polacco, ma degno di tutte le patrie, soggetto per infinite virtuose parti così illustre che può veramente dirsi *Mostro in natura.* Et, se a tempi di Leone fece tanto strepito un Archi-poeta (che non fu però più di quello, che si legge, ma forse meno *poi che nello scrivere si compiacciono talvolta gli huomini in accrescimento di lode dir molte bugie)* il presente Polacco, non Archipoeta, ma Re di Poeti, di gran lunga sopravanza, et gli effetti del passato, et l'opinione che si possa haver di lui stesso, et d'ogni altro favoritissimo dalle Muse.—Son certo vedrà con l'occhio dell'amore il *presente miracolo di Natura.*

† Sig. Stanislao Niegossevio il quale viene à Roma per farsi conoscere in cotesta città e dar quei saggi del suo valore, che ha dati altrove con maraviglia di ogniuno: Io mi rendo certo, che V. S. Illustriss. l'udirà con stupore; essendo cosa fuor di natura *non pure nella età in che egli è, ma in ogni altro maggiore, il far quelle pruove d'ingegno ch'egli ha fatto, e vuol fare così felicemente.....è dotato di qualità che sono indicibili, et se dicibili, incredibili.*

what is truly said of him to be incredible. The proofs which he has given of them are illustrious, nay most illustrious in Venice; and by its most noble republic he has been known, favoured, and recompensed with honours suitable to his high qualities."* In fine, to the Duke of Sora, Aldus writes, that Stanislaus is a "Pole adorned with supernatural qualities. Behold, adds he, an ornament, natural, and supernatural to the study of your lordship, a youth, a Polish gentleman, who in *feats of letters, and of arms,* surpasses in an extraordinary degree the belief of every one."† No. XXV.

These puffs of Aldus Manutius, with regard to Sig. Stanislaus Niegossevio, are at least as high as those of Crichton, (indeed much higher,) and it is to be remarked, that they are contained not in a dedication to the Pole himself, where there might have been full scope for panegyric, but in introductory letters, where there is always some check, lest there should not be a correspondence between the eulogy and the exhibition. It is to be remarked, also, that this *prodigy in nature,* this *supernatural being unrivalled in any age,* appeared immediately after Crichton, and that there are only four years and a half between the dedication of the *paradoxes* and these bombastic commendatory letters. Certainly that did not take place in this instance which is asserted by Shakespeare.

——In a theatre, the eyes of men,
After a well-grac'd actor leaves the stage,
Are idly bent on him that enters next,
Thinking his prattle to be tedious. ‡

What then are we to conclude from the dedication of Aldus, but that

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* Viene à Roma *un Miracolo di Natura, e più se più si può dire*—giovane virtuosissimo sopra gli anni in tanto che, à chi non prova il valor suo, non si fa credibile il vero, che si racconta di lui. Le isperienze ch'egli hà fatte, son illustri, et illustrissime in Vinetia, ove fu favorito, conosciuto, et anco riconosciuto da quella Eccelsa Republica, di honori convenienti à meriti così fatti.

† Polacco ornato di qualità oltra naturali. Ecco un ornamento allo Studio di V. S. naturale et sopranaturale: Un giovane, gentiluomo Polacco, il quale, con le pruove delle lettere, e dell'armi avanza straordinariamente la credenza d'ognuno.

‡ *Richard* II. Act. V. sc. 2. From the correspondence of dates, I believe this Polish youth to have been the person during whose visit of Tasso a plate of fruit vanished. See above, p. 170.

No. XXV. Crichton, whose memory was great, had a smattering of languages,* was acquainted with the Scholastic philosophy, and, what was exceedingly easy and common in those times, could argue on any given subject. He was not likely to meet with an opponent who could dispute, that is, jabber a few barbarous terms with him, in more than three or four languages, and as to his hundred kinds of verse, he must have invented many of them himself. The truth is, he seems to have been in straitened circumstances, and adopted this ostentation of talents to procure patronage. † This Sig. Stanislaus Niegossevio, an adventurer of the same kind, must, if we believe Aldus, have been a still greater miracle than Crichton, and Aldus himself must be classed with those who *si compiacciono talvolta, in accrescimento di lode dir molte bugie.*‡

An argument has been brought against the talents of Crichton, from the specimens of his poetry that remain, which it has been asserted are without beauty, and even frequently defective in prosody. There are few modern Latin poets in whose writings false quantities may not be found, but I am informed by Lord Woodhouselee, that the faults of prosody, in Crichton's

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* The task of acquiring a language had been very different to Crichton, and his reputed preceptor Buchanan, that "Scottish divinity," *Scotiae illud numen*, as he is called by Grotius. "Buchanan, (says Mr Irving) did not profess to be one of those bright geniuses who can acquire a new language every six weeks: he incidentally suggests that his knowledge of Latin was the result of much juvenile labour." *Life of Buchanan*, p. 6. Buchanani *Rer. Scot. Hist.* p. 4.

† ..... Fateor me, candida Nais,
Promeritum quaecunque fero: nec turpis egestas,
Infandumve scelus servi mea pectora vexat:
At me quis miserum magna cognoscit in urbe,
Aut quis ad aequoreas flentem solatur arenas.
Appulsus.

Had he been robbed by his servant?

‡ Renouard, in his *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde*, when he reaches 1561, (in which year, Paulus Manutius entrusted the superintendance of his press at Venice, to his son Aldus,) thus expresses himself. "Comme il s'agit maintenant de livres beaucoup moins importans, je prie qu'on ne m'impute pas à négligence, si je ne juge pas à propos de faire mention de certaines préfaces, dans lesquelles on ne trouve rien que de vaines, et insignifiantes louanges, écrites de ce style hyperbolique, devenu à la mode vers la fin du 16e siècle, en même temps que la profusion des titres de Magnifique, Excellent, &c." Tom. I. p. 330.

verses, are chiefly to be imputed to typographical errors. "It is notorious," says he, "that this edition of Cicero, by Aldus, (from the preface and commentaries on which these poems are taken,) is most incorrectly printed. There are typographical blunders almost in every page." The younger Aldus, indeed, was a most incorrect printer, and Tasso bitterly complains of the injury done to his works, by his carelessness.* The great poem of Crichton, his *Appulsus*, appears to me exceedingly crude and prosaic, but according to Lord Woodhouselee, (from the decisions of whose classical taste, no one will readily appeal,) his Ode to Lorenzo Massa, is "singularly beautiful." No. XXV.

I must remark, before concluding this estimate, that never was an age, or country, so fitted as Scotland, in the time of Crichton, for the production of a person, with the very kind of accomplishments which he has been described as possessing. In that age, almost every literary Scotsman had resided in different countries abroad, and almost every literary Scotsman wrote some book on the scholastic philosophy. John Rutherford, the teacher of Crichton, resided a considerable time in Paris, and was also professor at Coimbra, in Portugal. His works are thus enumerated by Mackenzie, in his *Lives of the most eminent writers of the Scots nation.* [Vol. II. p. 144.]

I. *De Arte disserendi,* lib. 4. Edin. 1580, in 4to. [1577.]

II. *Comment. in lib. Arist. de Arte Metrica.* Edin. 1557. 4to.

III. *Collatio Philosophiae Aristot. et Platon.*

IV. *Collatio Divi Thomae Aquinatis, et Scoti in rebus philosophicis.*

V. *Prefationes Solennes Parisiis et Conimbriae habitae.* Ext. typis Wechelianis.

No one could therefore be better fitted than Rutherford, for making a young man acquainted with the logic and metaphysics of the time: and to a person with a good memory, a few weeks conversation with one of the numerous Scotsmen, who had resided and studied in foreign countries, was sufficient to give that imperfect knowledge of a language, which is erected into a com-

* See *above*, p. 106, and Serassi, p. 312. See also Renouard, *Annales de l'imprimerie des Alde*, Tom. I. pp. 379, 382.

No. XXV. plete possession of it.* "Giovanni Pico, of Mirandula, (says Mr Roscoe, in his highly elegant *Life of Lorenzo de' Medici,)* arrived at Rome, in the twenty-first year of his age, with the reputation of being acquainted with twenty-two different languages. Eager to signalize himself as a disputant, Pico proposed for public debate, nine hundred questions, on mathematical, theological and scholastic subjects, including also enquiries into the most abstruse points of the Hebraic, Chaldaic, and Arabic tongues."† James Bonaventura Hepburn, a contemporary of Crichton, has the reputation of possessing a much greater number of languages than Pico. Seen through the mists of distance and of antiquity, what a prodigy would we consider Sir William Jones!

To conclude this ungracious topic—it appears probable that Crichton was in Italy considered as one of those literary mountebanks who were numerous in that age, and with whom no man of talents and reputation condescended to enter the *arena*. From Boccalini we learn that Crichton, "while he astonished the vulgar by his pretensions, excited nausea in the wise, who knowing that a whole life is not more than enough for the acquisition of a science, saw a young man of twenty-five, who pretended to be perfectly acquainted with them all." He exhibits Crichton as fixing up the following defiance, [not at Rome, where there is no evidence that our young Scotsman ever was, but in his ideal Parnassus.] *Nos Jacobus Critonius Scotus cujuscunque rei propositae ex improviso respondebimus.* To this a wag is represented as adding, "and he who would see him, let him go to the Falcon tavern," *E chi lo vuol vedere, vada all' hosteria del falcone;* upon which Crichton, indignant at being treated as a mountebank, is represented as departing in a pet.‡ In fact, from the number, who in that age, offered in Italy, to dispute on every topic, the art must have fallen into contempt. I have already mentioned Mazzoni, and the Pole; and I shall transcribe from Erythraeus, an account of one James Marchisetti, who, at the very period we are speaking of, gave specimens of

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* See in the *Buchanani Epistolae*, pp. 6, 83, how greatly Scotish students and professors abounded at that time in France; or Irving, *Life*, &c. pp. 201, 269.

† Vol. II. p. 91, 4to.

‡ *Ragguagli di Parnaso*, 40.

syllogistic talents more remarkable than any I have mentioned, and yet whose name, though he grew up to manhood, is not to be found in the literary history of his country.* No. XXV.

II. Whatever opinions, however, we may form of the talents of Crichton, it is evident that the guilt of his murder, (if he was murdered by the Prince of Mantua,) is in no respect diminished. I am sorry that my researches on this subject have been attended with very little success. The death of Crichton was a circumstance of too little moment to be mentioned in general history, and the writers of genealogies and family memoirs, are commonly panegyrists, who suppress every thing unfavourable to the members of the house, concerning which they write. The event is not taken notice of by Antonio Possevino, who, in his large history of the family of Gonzaga, writes very amply of Duke William, father of Vincenzo, and also at some length of the prince himself, after he became Duke. This work I have also found to be incorrect. The best chance of coming at the truth, is in letters written during the period, but I have not been successful in finding any which may set the matter at rest. In the small volume of the epistles of Aldus Manutius, no one is written previous to 1585, nor is there the least allusion to Crichton, except perhaps, in the following passage. It is contained in a letter recommending a person to Marco Veniero, and is dated Rome, March 31st, 1592. "Sa V. S. Illustrissima, che io sempre *functus sum officio cotè*, e deve ricordarsi dello Scozzese, il quale godè la benignità, e liberalità di cotesta Repubblica, favorito anche da lei, che si mosse e per favorir lui, e per obbligar me."

"As to the real cause and manner of our young Scotsman's death, (says Dr Kippis,) both of them remain in some degree of obscurity. That he was

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* Jacobus Marchisettus—tredecim natus annos, Philosophiam Aristotelis, ad quam addiscendam vix unius aetas hominis satis esse potest, ita complexus est totam, ut in arenam descendere, seque Aristotelis doctrinae propugnatorem acerrimum declarare, omnesque qui contra sentirent, in certamen provocare sit ausus. Illud vero omnem propemodum fidem excedit, quodque ego, nisi oculis accepissem meis, narranti non crederem, quod biennio post, volumen positionum, duobus fere millibus theologicarum assertionum refertum, edidit, seseque omnium, qui oppugnare eas vellent, argumentationum tanquam tela per triduum fortiter excepturum ac propulsaturum edixit, ac cer-

No. XXV. killed at a rencounter at the Carnival at Mantua, [if on the third of July, it could not be during the Carnival,] is testified by too many authors to be reasonably doubted. But whether there was that particular malignity on the part of Vincenzo di Gonzaga, which is commonly ascribed to him may be considered as uncertain." The prince of Mantua, was one of the most handsome youths of his age, which makes it less probable that it could be an affair of rivalship. Tasso pays him high compliments on his beauty, so high indeed, that it has been most absurdly conjectured, that his sonnets were dictated by an infamous passion. To him who is acquainted with the writings of Tasso, it will appear demonstratively, that he considered those sonnets on Vincenzo's beauty,* as the best means of paying court, and gaining the favour of a young person of such consequence. Nothing in these sonnets is half so absurd as the following passage in a dedication of one of the poet's discourses to the Duchess of Mantua, the Prince's mother, daughter of the Emperor Ferdinand I., and in the highest degree distinguished by her virtues. After praising her own beauty, Tasso tells her, " that she is born a second time, and her youth renewed in her most lovely children, of whom the prince is such, that one may well sing of him that verse of Horace,

——————Quo calet juventus
Nunc omnis, et mox virgines tepebunt."†

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taminis locum, gymnasii Romani, Societatis Jesu, aulam elegit, qui honos contigit ante ipsum nemini, ut jure gloriatur in epistola, quam ad Evangelistam Pallottam Cardinalem scripsit; qui tum apud Sixtum V., plurimum auctoritate et gratia pollebat, puerique ingenium, quod sibi monstri simile videretur, tuendum ornandumque susceperat. *Verum tot tantisque initiis non satis visâ sunt exitus respondere;* expectabantur enim ab eo immensa, infinita, ac supra humani vires ingenii; sed tanquam si natura desperaret, posse se operi, quod inchoaverat, per fastigium et culmen imponere, *hominem prope deseruit.* *Pinacotheca*, I. 72. Aldus himself gave a premature and plentiful blossom of talents, which did not ripen to a very valuable fruit.

* *Opere*, vol. VI. p. 169. *Langue Vincenzo*, &c.

† *Opere*, vol. VIII. p. 222. Manso speaking of Tasso's continence, says among other things, " Ma questo ben posso con sagramento testimoniare, ch'egli intorno alle operazioni di Venere naturalmente nimichevole fu d'ogn'atto ingiurioso alla natura, o alle sacre leggi del matrimonio, ed altrettanto schifo di ravolgersi nelle sozzure di queste femmine di mondo; onde con niuna di cotali sorte di persone ebbe egli in tutto il corso della sua vita a dimesticarsi." Tasso in his beau-

Another quality of the prince was, that he was in the highest degree fond of persons of genius, as his uncommon kindness to Tasso, Chiabrera, and others testify. "Moreover, (says Tiraboschi, speaking of Chiabrera,) the Duke of Mantua, Vincenzo Gonzaga, held him extremely dear, lodged him in his court, would always have him in his company in the chariot, bark, or at table, and assigned him an annual pension."* In Mr Beloe's *Anecdotes of Literature, and scarce books,* [vol. I. p. 81,] there is the following anecdote, which is exceedingly descriptive of Vincenzo's fondness of literature. "In the Cracherode collection," says he, "are two of the Aldine editions of Virgil, on vellum, viz. that of 1501, and that of 1505. The latter is of extraordinary beauty, but the former claims particular attention from possessing the autograph of a former Duke of Mantua, to whom it belonged. I copy the following from a leaf in the beginning: No. XXV.

"O concivis mi Car.me Virgili meae penae socius et particeps, quantum tibi debeo? tu enim dum magnopere tribulor, tua lectione tantum solatii mihi praebes, ut minus sentiam dolorem in quo tam immersus sum, quod si tu non esses, valde timerem ne me omnino perderem, in hac tam infausta die.

26 Octobris, 1594.

Vincentius Gonsaga Dux Mantuae et Montisferrati scripsit manu propria."

This note upon Virgil, seems to be the effusion of a feeling and elegant mind,† and certainly from every account we have of the prince, no person could be pointed out, more likely to cherish talents such as have been assign-

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tiful Dialogue, *the Messenger*, expressing his hope that the time was at hand, when princes would become philosophers, 'Non è irragionevole la tua speranza, rispose lo Spirito, perchè quel giovenetto Principe, *del cui valore, e della cui cortesia* tu così t'accendesti come alcuno peravventura non si accesse giammai di amor di donna, dà in questi anni acerbi presagio di se d'avere ad esser tale quale i Filosofi nelle lor contemplazioni quasi in sogno l'immâginarono, e se l'uso corrotto del mondo con false apparenze di bene non isvierà l'animo suo dall' amore della Filosofia, vera sarà la tua divinazione." *Opere*, vol. VII. p. 138. See Warton, *History of English Poetry*, vol. III. p. 405. Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, sparsim.

* *Storia della Lett. Ital.* Tom. VIII. p. 297.

† In the rich library of Lord Spencer, there is a superb copy upon vellum of the Aldine Horace, M.DI. "Il avoit appartenu, (says Renouard,) à Gonzague, duc de Mantoue, de la main duquel y est une note prouvant quel cas ce Prince faisoit, et du poète, et de l'edition." I. 41. The Virgil mentioned above, is now in the British Musaeum.

No. XXV. ed to Crichton. Vincenzo, however, had some bad qualities; he was exceedingly expensive, and was fond of gambling.* In a letter of Cardinal Ossat, dated 8th October, 1584, he says, " Le prince de Mantoue avec la princesse, sa femme [a daughter of the Grand Duke,] est a Florence, et sera a Florence jusques a Nöel, tant pour ce que le Grand Duc desire le traiter le plus longuement qu'il pourra, et se le gagner et faire sien de plus en plus, qu'aussi pour ce que le dit Prince n'est guere bien avec le Duc son pere, d'autant qu'il veut depenser trop, et le Duc son pere veut qu'il depense peu." Finally, Possevino after extolling the munificence, hilarity, courtesy, religion, or rather superstition of this prince, of which last he gives some very striking instances, adds, that he was blamed by some as vengeful and passionate, and as not observing moderation or propriety in his generosity.†

It has been asserted by different writers, that Crichton was appointed tutor of the prince of Mantua. Dempster says, that he was *Principis Mantuani juventuti praepositus*, but this is not alleged by the other two eulogists, Imperialis and Urquhart, nor do I think it at all probable. Vincenzo was born 21st September, 1562, and in 1580, at least a year before Crichton went to Mantua, was married to a daughter of Alexander Farnese, Duke of Parma. This marriage, however, was dissolved after a few months, *naturali impedimento uxoris, contractas nuptias dirimente*, and in 1584, Vincenzo was again married to Leonora, daughter of Francis, Grand Duke of Tuscany, and sister of Mary de' Medici, afterwards wife of Henry IV. of France. There is a curious story on the subject of this marriage, in Possevino, [p. 782.]

If we compare the age of Crichton, with that of Vincenzo; if we reflect

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* " In oltre cessò di vivere nel dì 18 di Febbraio 1612, Vincenzo Gonzaga Duca di Mantova, Principe che non iscarseggiava di mente, ma che spezialmente fu portato dal suo naturale alla giovalità e all' allegria, gran giocatore, grande scialacquator del danaro, sempre involto fra il lusso, e gli amori, sempre in lieti passatempi o di festi, o di balli, o di Musiche, o di Commedie." Muratori, *Annali d'Italia*, vol. XI. p. 38.

† Quidam vindictae nimium, ideoque in abrupta tractum interdum opinantur; cupiebantque munificentiae modum, tempus, locum esse. *Gonzagae familia*, p. 844. 1626, folio. I learn from this work, that it was by the influence of Duke William of Mantua, who had pardoned Scipio Gonzaga, that the latter was made a Cardinal. See *above*, p. 191.

that the latter had been a considerable time married before he saw the young Scotsman; if we contemplate the sage character of Duke William of Mantua, who would never have entrusted the forming of his son to a young adventurer of twenty-two,* we shall be led to conclude that Crichton was not tutor to Vincenzo, during the short time of their acquaintance. It is much more probable, that, from the admiration of the prince for literary persons, it was he who invited Crichton to Mantua, that they were bottle companions, and that some unfortunate quarrel was the cause of our young countryman's death. The biographers of Crichton, do not dwell with horror on No. XXV.

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* Since the preceding sheets were printed, I have by the assistance of the same Honourable friend, from whom I received the translation, at p. 416, discovered the original; which is valuable, as fixing with accuracy the year of Crichton's birth, and the day of his death. The conjectural reasoning which I have used, however, is not altogether superfluous, since it confirms the typographical correctness of the number XXII. in the passage. It is to be found at page 217, of the ninth volume of the folio Aldine collection of Cicero's works, and serves as a *Dedication* to the *Timaeus* of Cicero.

Memoriae
Jacobi Critonii.

Vel mortuum enim Te laudari, par est, Jacobe Critoni, quem importuna mors nobis abripuit. Qu enim Te vivum non admiratus est? quis mortuum non luget? Ego quidem, Te vivo, maximum judicii mei fructum capiebam; mortuo, doloris modum non invenio. Vixisses, Critoni, vixisses, neque unquam Te Virgilij Patria vidisset. Fato enim quodam nobis misero contigit, ut, quae ipsi ortum dedit, superiore anno (cum nondum XXII. aetatis annum explesses, gloriaeq. satis, nobis minimum vixisses,) Tibi vi [*sic*] vitam eriperet. Semper ego. Tui memoriam colam. Semper tua imago ante oculos obversabitur. Semper idem mihi eris; qui idem semper eris bonis omnibus. Faxit Deus, ut caelestia omnia Tibi felicia contingant; qui caelestia vivens semper adamaris, et in eorum contemplatione, totus versatus sis. O diem funestum. V. Non. Quinct. Haec ad Te, ex hoc infelici, ad illud caeleste domicilium, bona omnia precans, Scribo.

Venetijs, IV. Non. Nov. M.D.XXCIII.
Qui Te vivum coluit, mortuumq. observat,
Aldus Mannuccius, P. F. A. N. [viz. Pauli. f. Aldi. n.]

The translator, at p. 416, seems to have considered *vi*, as a part of the word *vitam*, left by incorrect printing and revision, which the typography of Aldus, and the appearance of his text sufficiently warrant. The probability, however, is, that it means *by violence*, which, still, does not absolutely criminate Vincenzo. Aldus, as appears from this edition of Cicero, was sufficiently eager to procure patronage, by his numerous dedications, and he would scarce have risked the sale of this voluminous work, and his own safety, by awakening in the minds of every one, the atrocious crime of a neighbouring literary prince, so very soon after its commission. Had Aldus himself been so imprudent, the state of Venice, which at that time had very intimate relations with the court of Mantua, would not, one should think, have permitted it.

No. XXV. the atrocity of the prince, and if we were to believe Sir Thomas Urquhart, Crichton would have been the injurious person. The account of Sir Thomas, as has been seen, is absurd and ridiculous in the highest degree, but it may be taken in some measure as evidence of the general feeling which was entertained in his time with regard to the action of Vincenzo.

I have not been able to detect any thing in the epistles of Tasso, which can enable me to throw light on this subject. In a letter from Mantua, 22d October, 1586, he entreats Scipio Gonzaga to use his influence with the prince in his favour, a common thing with the poet, who often sought recommendations to his best friends, from persons who were less dear to them than himself. "I write, (says he,) as I am accustomed, to your Lordship, with little diligence, since I am more encouraged by the affection you bear me, than disheartened by your judgement. My letters to you will not be of the number of those which they are going to print; this one, at least, I hope shall be kept secret, as I would not that it were known that any spur or stimulus is necessary to the benignity or liberality of the Prince. I do not mention clemency, because I recollect I was forbid to speak of it."* It is doubtful whether the advice of Scipio was a general one, as Tasso had greatly offended the Duke of Ferrara, by complaining that he designed to take away his life, or whether it was a particular injunction, not to speak in this manner of the prince of Mantua, lest it might awaken distressing recollections. I am inclined, however, to believe that the former is the truth.

Towards the end of 1582, the *Messagiero*, of Tasso, was first published by the Giunti, and inscribed to the Prince of Mantua. Unfortunately the dedication is not dated, otherwise if it was written towards the close of that year, it would be almost decisive against the murder of Crichton. On the seventh and eighth of September 1582, Tasso was visited by Aldus Manutius, and as the death of our young countryman happened only two months before, it would no doubt form one of their topics of conversation. Now, in this dedication Tasso thus addresses Vincenzo. "But should it not be your pleasure to pre-

* Nè stimo, che le lettere, che io le scrivo, saranno fra quelle che vogliano stampare, o questa almeno, la quale vorrei che stesse occulta in modo, che mai non si risapesse che alla benignità del Signor Principe fossero stati necessarii sproni, o stimoli: della clemenza non parlo, perchè mi ricordo, che mi fu vietato il ragionarne. *Opere*, vol. X. p. 64.

serve the *Messenger* in life, still it would be more agreeable to see him expire under your name than living under that of another, even with the hope of eternity. Let your highness, however, reflect, if it be suitable to your grandeur to allow that to perish unjustly, or at least rigorously, which has repaired under the shade of your favour."* Tasso wrote his dedications with great delicacy, and he would never have used a metaphor, which could not fail to awaken the most painful reflections in the mind of Vincenzo, and which to the public would seem a keenly envenomed satire. No. XXV.

It would be easy for me to adduce several passages of a like nature, which might seem, in some degree, to clear the prince of Mantua, from the charge of having committed this dreadful crime. None of these, however, is decisive, or is such as at all to balance the direct evidence, and it is necessary for me to apologise to my reader, for detaining him so long on a subject, remotely connected with any general principle, and upon which I can come to no clear result. My object has been, since I could not satisfy, to awaken curiosity. Something perhaps might be done in this country to throw light on the family and education of Crichton, and I am hopeful that some Italian, who has a better opportunity than we have of examining the writings of his countrymen, and especially the manuscripts in the different libraries of Italy will develope this subject, and enable us to come to some certain conclusion.

The great relative, and indeed absolute extension of this volume, reduces me to the awkward necessity of suppressing Nos. XXVI. XXX. XXXI. XXXIII. XXXIV. and XXXVII. *of this Appendix, which, however, were by no means essential to the illustration of the Life of Tasso—three of these Nos. were Italian letters.*

No. XXVII.—P. 77.

LETTER OF CONDOLENCE FROM GUARINI, TO THE DUCHESS OF URBINO, ON THE DEATH OF HER SISTER LEONORA OF ESTE.

Coloro, che stimano in questo mondo essere alcuna sincera felicità vivono * No. XXVII.

* Consideri nondimeno Vostra Altezza, s'alla sua grandezza si conviene di lasciar perire ingiustamente, o almeno rigorosamente chi sotto l'ombra del suo favor s'è riparato. *Opere*, vol. IX. p. 486.

No. XXVII. infelicimente felici. Et però quanto prima un'animo ben composto si libera da queste non conosciute miserie, in grazia di Dio, con immortal memoria della sua vita, et soddisfazzione di chi rimane, tanto, a me pare, che più felice stimar si debbia. Si come senz'alcun fallo giudico essere intervenuto di Madama Lionora Eccellentissima, che Dio habbia in gloria, sorella di V. A. della quale io non dubbito punto che sì come l'amore e'l sangue l'havria fatta piangere per morta, così la prudenza, et la fede, non la faccia credere, et consolarsi che viva. Piaccia à sua Divina Maestà di aggiungere alla vita di lei quegli anni, che ha scemati alla Illustrissima Sorella, non per chè io stimi propria felicità di V. A. il vivere lungamente; ma perchè lungamente felici non possiam' vivere noi senza lei: La quale supplico humilmente à perdonarmi l'arditezza di quest'ufficio, poich'egli viene accompagnato dalla mia tanto certa et tanto naturale divozione verso l'A. V. Alla quale fo humilissima riverenza.

No. XXVIII.—P. 92.

ADDITIONAL REMARKS ON THE CONFINEMENT OF TASSO.

No. XXVIII. I have examined in the text the hypothesis which attributes the imprisonment of Tasso to his love for Leonora, and have shown that it rests upon no solid foundation. In fact, my only doubt now is whether Tasso was treated with unjustifiable harshness by Alphonso, and should this book reach a second edition, I shall soften one or two unguarded expressions, which, in conformity with other writers who have spoken of Tasso, I have used on the cruelty of the Duke of Ferrara. That this prince was greatly irritated with the poet, on account of his design to enter into the service of the Medici, is evident from the deep impression this seems to have made on Tasso's mind.* As soon, however, as he saw the latter's afflicted state, he "shewed him, we

* See *above*, vol. I. pp. 317, 319. II. pp. 399, 404.

No. XXVIII.

are told by Tasso himself) the affection, not merely of a patron, but of a father or brother."* When the poet, after his flight from Ferrara returned thither, his reception was such that he was induced, he tells us, to pity his enemy, the philosopher of the court.† It is true his writings were kept back from him, but this, considering the proofs of mental alienation he had given, only shows the high estimation in which they were held. Nor is it wonderful that he could not obtain audience of Alphonso so often as he wished; as it is impossible to read Tasso's account to the Duke of Urbino, of his conduct at Ferrara, after his return from his first flight, without acknowledging that he must have wearied out the patience of the person most sincerely interested in his welfare.‡ Accordingly, we find him complaining successively of all the friends to whom his genius and virtues had endeared him—of Cardinal Albano, Scipio Gonzaga, Scalabrino and others, who, there is every reason to believe, were deficient neither in regard for him, nor in affectionate zeal for his happiness.

It is not unlikely, also, that the confinement of Tasso, upon his return to Ferrara after his second flight, was owing to no particular offence, but to regard for his welfare. What renders this probable is the poet's own uncertainty as to the cause of his confinement, which he at one time attributes to violent expressions he had used; at another, to the anger of the Duke of Tuscany; at a third, to the Cardinal of Este—circumstances which can easily be accounted for, if we suppose that his imprisonment was occasioned merely by regard for his own safety, and the comfort of his friends. He fled away twice from Ferrara, and in his last flight from Urbino to Turin, he had for a great part of the journey waded on foot through mud and water, and exposed during the winter, to the unannounced and terrible torrents of Lombardy.‖ When he arrived at Turin, he would have been repulsed from its gates, had it not been his accidental meeting with an acquaintance.¶ In such circumstances, his friends must have considered his confinement as useful and neces-

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* Vol. I. p. 312. † See *above*, pp. 19, 390. ‡ See *above*, pp. 19. *et seq.*
‖ See *above* pp. 44, 398. ¶ p. 44.

No. XXVIII. sary. * Besides, at this period, Tasso, in order to dispel his melancholy, had resorted to the common but fatal expedient of intemperance in the use of wine, so as greatly to aggravate the violence of his distemper. † This furnished another, and certainly very powerful and reasonable motive for his confinement.

It remains to be examined if this imprisonment was barbarous in the mode of its administration. We have seen that the apartments which Tasso occupied during the greater part of his confinement were comfortable; ‡ and Muratori, of whom Alphonso (on account of his treatment of Don Caesar, ancestor to the Dukes of Modena, that historian's patrons) is no favourite, speaks thus of Tasso's imprisonment in his *Antiquities of the House of Este*. "The cause why Tasso was by [Alphonso's] order shut up in the hospital of St Anne, and there detained, *with every comfort*, for a long period, I have never been able to investigate. Moreover, I have in my hand billets, from which it would appear that he himself was ignorant of this, since he attributes it at one time to his having traduced the Grand Duke of Tuscany; at another, to his having offended other princes, by whose ill offices he considered himself as confined in this place." || The poet was frequently allowed to leave the prison, when conducted by a friend, and was even present at masquerades in Ferrara. ¶ All these circumstances render it dubious,

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* P. 48. When Tasso, after his confinement at Ferrara, went to live at Mantua, he was always in his walks attended by a servant of the duke. (p. 193.) This was probably to prevent his wandering away from that city.

† See *above*, p. 20. And in the *Messaggiero*, Tasso says to the spirit, "so ben io, ed in ciò non m'inganno, che soverchiamente bevo." VII. p. 102.

‡ See *above*, p. 97.

|| La cagione, perchè esso Tasso fosse per ordine suo ristretto nello Spedale di S. Anna et ivi detenuto *con tutti i suoi agi* lungo tempo, non l'ho io mai potuta rinvenire. Quel che è più, stanno in mia mano de' suoi biglietti, per li quali può apparire, che nè pur egli la sapesse, al vedere che vien da lui stesso attribuita ora all'aver sparlato del Gran Duca di Toscana, ora all'avere offeso altri Principi per gli mali uffizj de' quali si riputava confinata in quel luogo. *Anichità Estensi*, tom. II. p. 405.

¶ See *above*, p. 117. In a letter dated January 7. 1586, Tasso says, "Il P. D. Angelo fratello di V. S. è venuto à vedermi in una città et in una stagione piene di Maschere nella quale io ebbi già molti piaceri, et ora ho poche consolazioni." *Oper.* vol. X. p. 317.

whether anger at Tasso, or a real regard for him was the cause of his confinement in the hospital; nor should I hesitate a moment in declaring for the latter, were it not certain that Alphonso was of a vindictive temper, and that the poet had by his writings given that prince very great offence. It is not improbable that the motives of the Duke of Ferrara may have changed, and, that though the imprisonment of Tasso had taken place from a concern for his welfare, it was prolonged as a punishment, after the poet had by his appeals to princes and the public, represented Alphonso as a persecutor. No. XXVIII.

No. XXIX.—P. 132.

CHAUNT OF THE VERSES OF TASSO, BY THE GONDOLIERS OF VENICE.

No. XXIX.

It has been stated in the text, that the Gondoliers of Venice are accustomed to sing the verses of Tasso.—"On entend quelquefois (says Mad. de Stael in her fascinating *Corinne,*) un gondolier, qui placé sur le pont de Rialte, se met à chanter une stance de Tasse, tandis qu'un autre gondolier lui repond par la stance suivante à l'autre extremité du canal. La musique très-ancienne de ces stances ressemble au chant d'Eglise, et de près on s'aperçoit de sa monotonie, mais en plein air le soir, lorsque les sons se prolongent sur le canal comme les reflets du soleil couchant, et que les vers du Tasse prêtent aussi leurs beautès de sentiment à tout cet ensemble d'images, et d'harmonie, il est impossible que ces chants n'inspirent pas une douce melancholie."

The most striking account which I have met with of the chaunt of Tasso's verses by the gondoliers, is contained in Mr D'Israeli's very interesting Miscellany the *Curiosities of Literature.* "An anonymous gentleman, says the author of that work, has greatly obliged me with an account of the recitation of these two poets (Ariosto and Tasso) by the gondoliers of Venice, extracted from his travelling pocket-book." The following is this account.

"It is well known, that in Venice, the gondoliers know by heart long passages from Ariosto and Tasso, and are wont to sing them in their own me-

No. XXIX. lody. But this talent seems at present on the decline; at least, after taking some pains, I could find no more than two persons who delivered to me in this way a passage from Tasso.

'There are always two concerned, who alternately sing the strophes. We know the melody eventually by Rousseau, to whose songs it is printed; it has properly no melodious movement, and is a sort of medium between the canto fermo, and the canto figurato; it approaches to the former, by recitativical declamation, and to the latter by passages and course, by which one syllable is detained and embellished.

"I entered a gondola by moonlight, one singer placed himself forwards, and the other aft, and thus proceeded to Sto. Giorgio. One began the song: when he had ended his strophe, the other took up the lay, and so continued the song alternately. Throughout the whole of it the same notes invariably returned, but according to the subject matter of the strophe, they laid a greater or a smaller stress, sometimes on one, and sometimes on another note; and indeed changed the enunciation of the whole strophe, as the object of the poem altered.

"On the whole, however, their sounds were hoarse and screaming: they seemed, in the manner of all rude uncivilized men, to make the excellency of their singing consist in the force of their voice; one seemed desirous of conquering the other by the strength of his lungs, and so far from receiving delight from this scene, (shut up as I was in the box of the gondola) I found myself in a very unpleasant situation.

"My companion, to whom I communicated this circumstance, being very desirous to keep up the credit of his countrymen, assured me that the singing was very delightful when heard at a distance. Accordingly, we got out upon the shore, leaving one of the singers in the gondola, while the other went to the distance of some hundred paces. They now began to sing against one another, and I kept walking up and down between them both, so as always to leave him, who was to begin his part. I frequently stood still, and hearkened to the one and to the other.

"Here the scene was properly introduced. The strong declamatory, and as it were shrieking sound, met the ear from far, and called forth the attention; the quickly succeeding transitions, which necessarily required to be

sung in a lower tone, seemed like plaintive strains succeeding the vociferations of emotion or of pain. The other, who listened attentively, immediately began where the former left off, answering him in milder or more vehement notes, according as the purport of the strophe required. The sleepy canals, the lofty buildings, the splendor of the moon, the deep shadows of the few gondolas that moved like spirits hither and thither, increased the striking peculiarity of the scene, and amidst all these circumstances, it was easy to confess the character of this wonderful harmony. No. XXIX.

"It suits perfectly well with an idle solitary mariner, lying at length in his vessel at rest on one of those canals, waiting for his company, or for a fare; the tiresomeness of which situation is somewhat alleviated by the songs and poetical stories he has in memory. He often raises his voice as loud as he can, which extends itself to a vast distance over the tranquil mirror, and as all is still around, he is as it were in a solitude in the midst of a large and populous town. Here is no rattling of carriages, no noise of foot passengers; a silent gondola glides, now and then, by him, of which the splashing of the oars are scarcely to be heard.

"At a distance he hears another, perhaps utterly unknown to him. Melody and verse immediately attach the two strangers; he becomes the responsive echo to the former, and exerts himself to be heard as he had heard the other. By a tacit convention, they alternate verse for verse; though the song should last the whole night through, they entertain themselves without fatigue; the hearers who are passing between the two, partake of the amusement.

"This vocal performance sounds best at a great distance, and is then inexpressibly charming, as it only fulfils its design in the sentiment of remoteness. It is plaintive, but not dismal in its sound, and at times it is scarcely possible to refrain from tears. My companion, who otherwise was not a very delicately organized person, said quite unexpectedly, "It is singular how melting that kind of song is, and it is much more so when it is better sung." *E singolare come quel canto intenerisce, e molto più quando lo cantano meglio.*

"I was told that the women of Libo, the long row of islands that divides the Adriatic from the Lagouns, particularly the women of the extreme dis-

No. XXIX. tricts of Malamocca and Palestrina, sing in like manner the works of Tasso, to these and similar tunes.

"They have the custom, when their husbands are fishing out at sea, to sit along the shore in the evenings, and vociferate these songs, and continue to do so with great violence, till each of them can distinguish the responses of her own husband at a distance.

"How much more delightful, and more appropriate does this song shew itself here, than the call of a solitary person uttered far and wide, till another equally disposed shall hear and answer him! It is the expression of a vehement and hearty longing, which yet is every moment nearer to the happiness of satisfaction." *

No. XXXII.—P. 191. †

SUPPLICATION OF TASSO, TO THE EMPRESS.

No. XXXII. Torquato Tasso, umilissimo, e devotissimo servitore di Vostra Maestà, e soggetto del Cattolico, e potentissimo Re, suo fratello, avendo, già molt'anni sono passati, molte speranze, e quasi promesse della grazia dell'uno, e dell'altro, supplica V. M. che si degni d'averlo in qualche modo sotto la sua protezione, accioch' egli possa passar sicuramente per tutti gli Stati mediatamente sottoposti alla C. M. dell' Imperadore, suo figliuolo, per andarsene verso Roma, e Napoli; nelle quali parti ha molti negozj, e particolarmente è avvisato da parenti, e dagli amici, che per ragione se gli aspettano della dote materna due mila, e cinquecento scudi; senza i quali il supplichevole difficilmente stimerebbe di poter vivere l'avanzo della sua vita, essendo egli infermo, e frenetico, e maleficiato, ed innocente d'ogni colpa, e d'ogni sospetto d'eresia, che si potesse aver di lui, prima, ch'avesse fatto ricorso alla Sacra,

* *Curiosities of Literature*, vol. II. p. 156. Ed. 1807.

† See p. 451. *n*.

e Cesarea Maestà dell' Imperador suo figliuolo. E perch'egli è costantissimo nella Fede Cattolica, e tanto sicuro della sua antica innocenza, quanto certo della nuova, e vecchia perfidia, e malignità de' suoi nemici; crede che V. M. di leggieri esaudirà le sue umilisime preghiere, massimamente dopo tante calamità, e tanti travagli, che da lui sono stati patiti, e tanti torti, ch'egli ha sostenuti in tutte le parti d'Italia, e particolarmente nel Regno di Napoli, e negli Stati de' Principi sottoposti all' Imperadore; nell' uno de' quali può far sommo favore, e negli altri somma grazia. Di Mantova. No. XXXII.

No. XXXV.—P. 284.

OF THE PROBABILITY THAT THE CONVERSATION OF MANSO, AND THE EXAMPLE OF TASSO, INSPIRED MILTON WITH THE DESIGN OF WRITING AN EPIC POEM.

I have remarked at page 283, that "all the biographers of Milton, from Toland to Symmons, have conjectured that his meeting with Manso increased with new vehemence his thirst of poetical immortality, and even suggested his design of writing an epic work." This I exemplified by quotations from three of these biographers; and I added, that I hoped I should be able to strengthen by some new arguments, the probability of their conjectures. These arguments it will not be improper to introduce with a short account of the growth of the genius and projects of the English poet, No. XXXV.

"My father (says he in a passage formerly quoted) destined me when I was yet a child, to the study of polite literature, and such was the avidity of my pursuit, that till the age of twelve, I seldom quitted till midnight my studies for my bed." The poems which he soon afterward began to write, shew what promise he gave of being an illustrious man.

——— The spirit of a youth,
That means to be of note———

No. XXXV. In his poem to his father, Milton celebrates in the most enthusiastic strains, the praises of poetry; and seems now sufficiently conscious of his genius. His hope of renown is still more strongly attested in a letter written in his twenty-ninth year, to his most beloved friend, Charles Diodati. "You enquire," says he, "with a kind of solicitude even into my thoughts.—Hear then, Diodati, but let me whisper in your ear, that I may not blush at my reply, while I utter great things,—I think, so help me Heaven! of immortality. You enquire also, what I am doing? I nurse my wings, and meditate a flight, but my Pegasus rises as yet on very tender pinions. Let me be humbly wise"*

We see from this letter, written the year before he visited Italy, [which was in 1638,] that Milton had some indistinct prospect of a great work, but in none of the many documents which remain do we find any mention, prior to his travels, of his design to attempt an epic poem. On the contrary, he seems to have had a more natural propensity to "those dramatic constitutions wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign." It was in Italy that Milton received that high honour which nourishes the arts, and was confirmed in the opinion which he had long conceived, and which seems born with every heroic mind, that he was destined for great things. "I began," says he, speaking of his Italian friends, "thus far to assent both to them, and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting, which now grew daily upon me, that by labour and intense study, (which I take to be my portion in this life,) joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes, as they should not willingly let it die."†

That it was the conversation, and encouragement of Manso, which first directed Milton to the pursuit of the epic palm, seems probable from this, that

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* Multa solicitè quaeris, etiam quid cogitem. Audi, Theodote, verum in aurem ut ne rubeam, et sinito paulisper apud te grandia loquar; quid cogitem quaeris? ita me bonus Deus, immortalitatem. Quid agam vero? περιφυω, et volare meditor: sed tenellis admodum adhuc pennis evehit se noster Pegasus, humilè sapiamus.

† *Works*, vol. I. p. 120.

it is in his poem to that nobleman, he first hints an intention of this sort. It would seem from this poem, that Arthur was then the object of his choice; and it has been remarked by Mr Hayley, that, "in the discourses on epic poetry, which are included in the prose works of Tasso, Arthur is repeatedly recommended as a proper hero for a poem."* This renders it probable that Tasso and Manso, first suggested the epic plan to Milton; and in his verses to the Marquis of Villa, there is an implied comparison of himself with the Italian bard. No. XXXV.

> Oh might so true a friend to me belong!
> So skill'd to grace the votaries of song;
> Should I recall, hereafter, into rhyme,
> The kings and heroes of my native clime;
> Arthur, their chief, who even now prepares,
> In subterraneous being, future wars.†

It appears, then, that the poetical enthusiasm of the English bard, first received an epic direction in Italy, and that it is extremely probable that this was owing to the example of Tasso, and the advice of Manso. That the poet of Italy greatly engaged the thoughts of Milton, after his return from that country, is evident I think from the following passages, which have hitherto passed unnoticed by any of his biographers or commentators. They occur in his pastoral *Epitaphium Damonis*, an eclogue written on the death of his beloved friend Diodati, who had died during Milton's absence from England. This *Epitaphium* was composed soon after the poet's arrival, is written with much affecting tenderness; and is equally honourable to the heart, as to the genius of its author.

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* *Life of Milton*, p. 244.

† O mihi si mea sors talem concedat amicum!
Phœbaeos decorasse viros qui tam bene norit,
Si quando indigenas revocabo in carmina reges,
Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem.

Mansus, v. 77.

No. XXXV. In the first place, Milton, in this pastoral, denominates himself Thyrsis, which, I have remarked, was the same assumed by Tasso, in his pastoral, the *Aminta.**

> Nec dum aderat Thyrsis; pastorem scilicet illum
> Dulcis amor Musae, Thusca retinebat in urbe.†

It has been remarked, that there is a Mopsus spoken of, in the *Aminta*, by which is meant Sperone.§ In the poem of Milton there is also a Mopsus, and the description of the endowments of each is similar.

> ——————————Il saggio Mopso
> Mi predisse la mia cruda ventura;
> Mopso, *ch'intende il parlar de gli augelli,*
> E la virtù de l'erbe, e de le fonti.
>
> *Aminta*, At. I. Sc. 2.

> Mopsus ad haec, nam me redeuntem forte notârat,
> *Et callebat avium linguas*, et sidera Mopsus. ¶

In both poems, Mopsus is represented as understanding the language of birds, by no means a common accomplishment. Moreover, in the *Aminta*, Tasso says that he had been seen by a wolf, which prevented him for a long time from writing verses. A notion prevailed among the ancients, (Virgil, *Ec.* IX. *v.* 54.) and still, it is said, prevails in Italy, that if a wolf sees any man before it is perceived by him, it deprives him for some time of his voice.

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* Vol. I. pp. 177, 366.

† *Epitaphium Damonis*, v. 12.

> For Thyrsis still his wish'd return delay'd,
> The Muses held him in the Tuscan shade.
>
> *Symmons.*

§ Vol. I. p. 178.

¶ Then Mopsus said—the same who reads so well
The voice of birds, and what the stars foretell.

Cowper.

No. XXXV.

——————ond'io
Roco divenni, e poi gran tempo tacqui,
Quando i Pastori credean, *ch'io fossi stato,*
Visto dal lupo, e'l lupo era costui.

At. I. Sc. 2.

Milton too, says in his *Epitaph of Damon,* that unless he should be fascinated by the malignant glance of some wolf, his friend should not sleep in an unlamented sepulchre.

Quicquid erit, certe *nisi me lupus ante videbit,*
Indeplorato non comminuere sepulchro;
Constabitque tuus tibi honos, longumque vigebit.

From these passages and what follows, it should seem probable that Tasso was in the mind of the poet, while composing his *Epitaph of Damon,* and that he was fond perhaps of assuming the same poetical name.* Now, in this pastoral, Milton

* I have frequently thought, that although in a representation of *Comus,* at Ludlow Castle, in 1634, Henry Lawes, the musician, performed the part of the *Attendant Spirit,* or of *Thyrsis,* it is not improbable that Milton, in the composition of the piece, designed by *Thyrsis,* to signify himself. In a note upon the two verses which have been quoted above, from the Epitaph of Damon, *Nec dum aderat Thyrsis,* &c., Mr Warton says, "Thyrsis or Milton, was now at Florence. It is observable that he gives this name to the spirit, assuming the habit of a shepherd, in *Comus.*" Every thing that is said of Thyrsis, in the masque, will apply equally to Milton, as to Lawes; the lands, and house of his father, near Colnebrook, were held under the Earl of Bridgewater, so that the poet would consider himself as belonging, in some degree, to the service of the house. It has been observed by Mr Warton, that the shepherd lad, who is mentioned in *Comus,* is probably Milton's dearest friend, Diodati, whose skill in botany he so beautifully commemorates in his *Epitaph.* If this be the case, it forms an additional support to the above conjecture.

——————care and utmost shifts,
How to secure the lady from surprisal,
Brought to my mind a certain shepherd lad,
Of small regard to look to, yet well skill'd
In every virtuous plant, and healing herb
That spreads her verdant leaf to the morning ray:
He lov'd me well, and oft would beg me sing;
Which when I did, he on the tender grass

No. XXXV. expresses his resolute determination of writing an epic poem, on a British theme; a project which he had first announced in his epistle to Manso. His admiration of Tasso, mixing with his emotions for the loss of his friend, quite at last over-

---

Would sit, and hearken even to ecstacy,
And in requital, ope his leathern scrip,
And show me simples of a thousand names,
Telling their strange, and vigorous faculties.

Comus, v. 617.

The following is Cowper's translation of the passage alluded to in the *Epitaphium Damonis*. Milton is supposed to address his friend.

Haste let us forth together, and beguile
The heat, beneath yon whispering shades a while,
Or on the margin stray of Colne's clear flood,
Or where Cassibelan's grey turrets stood:
There thou shalt cull me simples, and shalt teach
Thy friend the name, and healing powers of each,
From the tall blue-bell, to the dwarfish weed,
What the dry land, and what the marshes breed;
For all their kinds alike to thee are known,
And the whole art of Galen is thy own.

It is to be remarked, likewise, that *Comus* was not the first mask performed in the country, by the children of the Earl of Bridgewater. About a year before (as Mr Todd conjectures,) the *Arcades* was presented by them, at Harefield, before Alice, Countess Dowager of Derby. Of this performance, Milton wrote the poetical part, and I think it not improbable that he acted the part of *Genius of the Wood*. For in the first place it is likely that a very young and elegant poet full of genius, and no doubt a favourite in the family for whom that genius was exerted, should have borne a part in an entertainment to which he had contributed by his pen, and which, by his musical and perhaps his declamatory powers, he was well qualified to embellish. The speech also has a certain Platonic mystical sublimity, which, though perfectly adapted to Milton, would have been ridiculous, or spoiled in the mouth of a very young, or of an ignorant person. Besides, if one considers it in an allegorical view, the employments of the spirit have a strong analogy with those of Milton—the evening walk; the midnight Platonic contemplations; and the early morning haunt. Some passages might be quoted from the speech, in confirmation of this conjecture, but as it is merely a conjecture, I have perhaps already dwelt on the subject too long. If Milton, however, was accustomed to act a part in the diversions of the noble family of Bridgewater, it is not unreasonable to suppose that the character of Thyrsis had a reference to himself, and that although in the grand public representation of *Comus*, in Ludlow Castle, the part of the *Attendant Spirit* was performed by Lawes, yet that in the rehearsal, (perhaps at Harefield, where *Arcades* was acted,) Milton himself was *Thyrsis*.—Did he by Melibœus, [*Comus*, *v.* 822.] mean his father?

powers him; and he wanders away from his melancholy, to the contemplation of the poetical visions which fascinated his imagination. No. XXXV.

Ah pereant herbae, pereant artesque medentum
Gramina, postquam ipsa nil profecere magistro. [*Diodato.*]
Ipse etiam, nam nescio quid mihi grande sonabat
Fistula, ab undecima jam lux est altera nocte,
Et tum forte novis admoram labra cicutis,
Dissiluere tamen rupta compage, nec ultra
Ferre graves potuere sonos, dubito quoque ne sim
Turgidulus, tamen et referam, vos cedite sylvae.*
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni!
Ipse Ego Dardanias Rutupina per aequora puppes
Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniae
Brennumque, Arviragumque duces, priscumque Belinum,
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos;
Tum gravidam Arturo fatali fraude Iögernen,
Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlöis arma,
Merlini dolus. O mihi tum si vita supersit,
Tu procul annosa pendebis, fistula, pinu,
Multum oblita mihi, aut patriis mutata camoenis
Brittonicum strides, quid enim? omnia non licet uni,
Non sperasse uni licet omnia, Mi satis ampla
Merces, et mihi grande decus (sim ignotus in aevum
Tum licet, externo penitusque inglorius orbi)
Si me flava comas legat Usa, et potor Alauni,
Vorticibusque frequens Abra, et nemus omne Treantae,
Et Thamesis meus ante omnes, et fusca metallis
Tamara, et extremis me discant Orcades undis.
Ite domum impasti, domino jam non vacat, agni!
Haec tibi servabam, lenta sub cortice lauri,

---

* ——————— Nè già suona
La mia sampogna umil, come soleva;
Ma di voce più altera, e più sonora,
Emula delle trombe empie le selve.
——————— e cantai Guerre, ed Eroi,
Sdegnando pastoral ruvido carme.

Aminta, At. I. sc. 2.

No. XXXV.

Haec, et plura simul, tum quae mihi pocula Mansus,
Mansus Chalcidicae non ultima gloria ripae,
Bina dedit, mirum artis opus, mirandus et ipse,
Et circum gemino caelaverat argumento.

Ah perish Galen's art, and wither'd be
The useless herbs that gave not health to thee!
Twelve evenings since, as in poetic dream,
I meditating sat some statelier theme,
The reeds no sooner touch'd my lips, though new
And unassay'd before, than wide they flew
Bursting their waxen bands, nor could sustain
The deep-ton'd music of the solemn strain;
And I am vain perhaps, but I will tell
How proud a theme I chuse—ye groves, farewell!
" Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare!
My thoughts are all now due to other care;
Of Brutus, Dardan chief, my song shall be,
How, with his barks, he plow'd the British sea,
First from Rutupia's tow'ring headland seen,
And of his consort's reign, fair Imogen;
Of Brennus, and Belinus, brothers bold,
And of Arviragus, and how of old,
Our hardy Sires th' Armorican controll'd,
And of the wife of Gorlöis who surpris'd
By Uther, in her husband's form disguis'd,
(Such was the force of Merlin's art) became
Pregnant with Arthur of heroic fame.
These themes I now revolve—and oh—if Fate
Proportion to these themes my lengthen'd date,
Adieu my Shepherd's reed—yon pine tree bough
Shall be thy future home, there dangle thou
Forgotten and disus'd, unless ere long
Thou change thy Latian for a British song—
A British?—even so—the pow'rs of man
Are bounded, little is the most he can;
And it shall well suffice me, and shall be
Fame and proud recompence enough for me,
If Usa, golden hair'd, my verse may learn,
If Alain bending o'er his crystal urn,
Swift-whirling Abra, Trent's o'er shadow'd stream,
Thames lovelier far than all, in my esteem,

No. XXXV.

Tamar's ore-tinctur'd flood, and after these,
The wave-worn shores of utmost Orcades.
Go, go, my lambs, untended homeward fare!
My thoughts are all now due to other care
All this I kept in leaves of laurel rind
Enfolded safe, and for thy view design'd,
This, and a gift from Manso's hand beside
(Manso not least his native city's pride)
Two cups that radiant as their giver shone
Adorn'd by sculpture—with a double zone.*

---

* I have frequently wondered what Milton means by the two cups, which he affirms he had received from Manso; and upon turning over in my mind what present it was most likely the young English poet should receive from that nobleman, (who in his *old age* was not remarkable for his liberality, but the contrary) I cannot help fixing upon books. I have thought of the works of Marino, and others that seem to have some analogy with the allegorical description, but the *et circum gemino caelaverat argumento,* seems to shew that Manso was *himself* the artist, and there were no books, indeed, the marquis was so likely to present to Milton as his own. Mr Hayley in his notes to Cowper's Translation of Milton's lesser poems, after mentioning Manso's *Life of Tasso*, says (p. 29.) "his other works are, *Poesie Nomiche* Venezia, 12° 1635. These contain a translation of Claudian's *Phœnix—Erocallia*, or *Dialogues on Love and Beauty*, in Venezia, 4° 1628. The arguments to these dialogues were written by the author's friend, Marino. These dialogues are curious compositions in the manner of Plato, and the Marquis introduces his friend Tasso as a speaker in more than one."

It is remarkable that one of the cups which Manso gave to Milton, was ornamented with the *Phœnix*, in his description of which, Milton has evidently the Idyll of Claudian in his mind. The other cup was adorned with emblems of the power and divinity of Love, which may perhaps be an allegorical account of the *Erocallia*, but as I am not in possession of Manso's works, I offer these merely as conjectures. The following are the verses of Milton:

Et circum gemino caelaverat argumento,
In medio rubri maris unda, et odoriferum ver,
Littora longa Arabum, et sudantes balsama sylvae;
Has inter Phœnix, divina avis, unica terris,
Caeruleum fulgens diversicoloribus alis,
Auroram vitreis surgentem respicit undis.
Parte alia, polus omnipatens, et magnus Olympus,
Quis putet? hic quoque Amor, pictaeque in nube pharetrae,
Arma corusca faces, et spicula tincta pyropo.
Nec tenues animas, pectusque ignobile vulgi
Hinc ferit, at circum flammantia lumina torquens,
Semper in erectum spargit sua tela per orbes
Impiger, et pronos nunquam collimat ad ictus:
Hinc mentes ardere sacrae, formaeque Deorum.

No. XXXV. No sooner is the epic design of Milton mentioned, but we see that Manso is suggested to his remembrance. The *Epitaph of Damon*, appears to have been written in 1639, and from a controversial work of Milton, published in 1641, we learn that a design of writing an epic poem was still ascendant in his mind, and that not Virgil nor Homer, but Tasso, the 'prevailing' Tasso, was the bard whom he wished to emulate. "Time serves not now," says he, "and perhaps I might seem too profuse to give any certain account of what the mind at home in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope, and hardest attempting; whether that epic form, whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil, and Tasso, are a diffuse, and the book of Job a brief model; or whether the rules of Aristotle are herein strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed; which, in them that know art and use judgement, is no transgression, but an enriching of art; and lastly, what king or knight before the conquest, might be chosen, in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero.* And as Tasso gave to a prince of Italy, his choice, whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the Infidels, or Belisarius against the Goths, or Charlemagne against the Lombards;† if to the instinct of nature, and the emboldening of art, aught may be trusted; and that there be nothing adverse in our climate, or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness from an equal diligence, and inclination, to present the like offer in our ancient stories."‡

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* Prendasi dunque il soggetto del Poema Epico da istoria di religione vera, ma non sì sacra che sia immutabile, e di secolo non molto remoto, nè molto prossimo alla memoria di noi che ora viviamo.... Tali sono i tempi di Carlo Magno, e d'Artù, e quelli che o di poco successero, o di poco precedettero... ed ultimamente chi vuol formare l'idea d'un perfetto cavaliero, non so per qual cagione gli nieghi questa lode di pietà e di Religione, ed empio, ed idolatra ce lo figuri. Che se a Teseo, o se a Giasone, o ad altro simile non si può attribuire senza manifesta disconvenevolezza il zelo della vera religione, Teseo, e Giasone, e gli altri simili si lascino, ed in quella vece di Carlo, d'Artù, e d'altri somiglianti si faccia elezione. Taccio per ora che dovendo il poeta aver molto riguardo al giovamento, molto meglio accenderà l'animo de' nostri uomini coll' esempio de' cavalieri fedeli, che d'infedeli, movendo sempre più l'esempio de' simili, che de dissimili, ed i domestici che gli stranieri. *Opere del Tusso*, vol. V. p. 493. What an idea does it give of the genius of that writer, who, in his twentieth year, dictated lessons, which were reverentially studied by Milton!

† See *above*, p. 295.

‡ *The Reason of Church Government*, book II. *Works*, vol. I. p. 120.

If the united probabilities which have now been stated are weighed; I believe it will be considered as no overweening zeal for the glory of Tasso, when I assert that his example and precepts had a predominating influence in kindling the emulation, and directing the design of Milton. To the rich and romantic fancy of this poet, the *Jerusalem Delivered* furnished a banquet more exquisite than even the writings of Virgil, and of Homer. Nor did he forget his great master, when (after the political warfare which had agitated his noon,) he began in the evening of his life, his sweetest, his divinest song. Tasso was still the poet on whom he turned a reverend eye, and his writings were the subject of his strictest meditations. No. XXXV.

When Milton resumed his idea of writing an epic poem, "Arthur, (says Mr Hayley,) had so far ceased to be his favourite, that he probably exclaimed in the words of Tasso,

Taccia Artù quei suoi
Erranti, che di sogni empion le carte.

"As the poem of Tasso, [the *Sette Giornate,*] is formed from the bible, and full of religious enthusiasm, it probably influenced the English visitor of Manso, in his choice of blank verse.... Milton is of all authors, undoubtedly one of the most original, both in thought, and expression; the language of his greater works is evidently borrowed from no model, but it seems to have great conformity with the precepts which Tasso has delivered in his *Discourses,* for the formation of an epic style."*

Several other writers have conjectured that Tasso's poem on the creation, influenced Milton in the adoption of blank verse, though without offering any argument in support of their supposition. In my opinion it not only influenced the English poet in the choice of blank verse, but the style of Tasso, in that poem, is very closely imitated by his great compeer. That Milton had read very attentively the *Sette Giornate,* has more than once been observed, and appears from the similarity of the following passages in this work, to others in the *Paradise Lost.*

* *Life of Milton,* p. 208, 274.

No. XXXV.

E tu, che d'ambo spiri, e d'ambo splendi,
O di gemina luce acceso Spirto,
.....Divino Amore!
Tu dal Padre, e dal Figlio in me discendi,
E nel mio core alberga; e quinci, e quindi
Porta le grazie, e'nspira i sensi, e i carmi,
Perch'io canti quel primo, alto lavoro,
Ch'è da voi fatto...*o tu l'insegni*...
*Tu, ch'el sai, tu'l rivela.**—

And chiefly thou, O Spirit, that dost prefer
Before all temples, th' upright heart, and pure,
Instruct me, for thou know'st.†

Nelle tenebre allor de' ciechi abissi
Lo Spirito divino, e sovra l'acque
Era portato, e l'umida natura
Già preparava: *Anch'ei presente all'opra*
Spirando gid forzd, e virtute all'onda,
D'uccello in guisa, che da frale scorza
Col suo caldo vital covata, e piena
Trae non pennato'l figlio, e quasi informe.‡

Thou from the first
Wast present; and with mighty wings outspread,
Dove-like sat'st brooding on the vast abyss,
And mad'st it pregnant.‖

Seco era allor, ch'all'ocean profondo
Termine pose, e diè sue leggi all'onde;
E quand' ei collocò del'ampia terra
I fondamenti era pur seco all'opre,
Seco'l tutto fornìo di giorno in giorno,
Quasi scherzando.§

Before the hills appear'd, or fountains flow'd,
Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse,

---

* *Giornata prima*, vol V. p. 5.
† *Paradise Lost*, I. 17.
‡ *Gior.* I. vol. V. p. 11.
‖ *Par. Lost*, I. 20.
§ *Gior.* I. p. 6.

Wisdom thy sister, and *with her didst play,*
In presence of th' Almighty Father, pleas'd
With thy celestial song.*

Ma solamente allor ne' primi tempi
Senza que' suo' pungenti, ispidi dumi,
Spiegò le foglie la purpurea rosa.†

Flow'rs of all hue, *and without thorn the rose.* ‡

Nodrito di pensier dolci, e soavi. ‖

Then feed on thoughts, that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers. §

The similarity of the above passages, and others might perhaps be found, puts it beyond all doubt, that Milton had read and studied the *Sette Giornate* of Tasso. But what I would principally remark, is, that he seems to have been indebted to that work for the character of his style; which approaches it as nearly as English blank verse can do the *Verso Sciolto* of the Italians. As this article has been expanded to an unusual length, I shall confine myself to one instance, but it is (like the *Experimentum crucis* in philosophy,) a very decisive one. Nothing in the style of Milton is more peculiar and characteristic, than the aggregation of a number of beautifully sounding names of places, winds, &c. as in the following example:

——————Not that fair field
Of Enna, where Prosérpine gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower, by gloomy Dis
Was gather'd, which cost Ceres all that pain
To seek her through the world; nor that sweet grove
Of Daphne by Orontes, and the inspir'd
Castalian spring, might with this Paradise
Of Eden strive; nor that Nyseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,

---

* *Par. Lost*, VII. 8. † *Gior.* III. p. 37. ‡ *Par. Lost*, IV. 256.
‖ *Gior.* III. p. 34. § *Par. Lost*, III. 36.

No. XXXV.

Whom Gentiles Ammon call, and Lybian Jove,
Hid Amalthea, and her florid son
Young Bacchus, from his stepdame Rhea's eye;
Nor, where Abassin kings their issue guard,
Mount Amara——— *

This aggregation of melodious names, is so characteristic of Milton, that Philips in his *Splendid Shilling*, written as a burlesque of the style of *Paradise Lost*, has availed himself of it more than once; and indeed, those passages in the *Splendid Shilling* are the features which principally, and perhaps alone, stamp the resemblance of the caricature with the original. I shall quote the first of them:

Not blacker tube, nor of a shorter size
Smokes Cambro-Briton (vers'd in pedigree
Sprung from Cadwallador, and Arthur, kings
Full famous in romantic tale) when he
O'er many a craggy hill, and barren cliff,
Upon a cargo of fam'd Cestrian cheese
High oversbadowing rides; with a design
To vend his wares, or at th' Arvonian mart,
Or Maridunum, or the ancient town
Yclep'd Brechinia, or where Vagas stream
Encircles Ariconium, fruitful soil!
Whence flow nectareous wines, that well may vye
With Massic, Setin, or renown'd Falern.

This collection of a number of names, occurs very often in the *Sette Giornate* of Tasso, and I have little doubt, that from that work, its use was adopted by Milton. The following is an example taken from Tasso's poem.

Ma qual canuto pescatore, e lasso,
Ch'appo le rive del Tirreno invecchi,
O del mar d'Adria, o dell' Egeo sonoro,

* *P. Lost*, IV. 268.

No. XXXV.

O lungo'l Caspio, o lungo'l ponto Eussino,
O'n su' lidi Vermigli, o dove inonda
Il gran Padre Ocean Germani e Franchi,
Scoti, e Britanni, od Etiopi, ed Indi.*

I shall only solicit the attention of my reader to two other instances. In the first, the poet is describing the Phœnix, preparing materials for its conflagration.

Quinci raccoglie dell' antica selva
I dolci succhi, e più soavi odori,
Che scelga'l Tiro, o l'Arabo felice,
O Pigmeo favoloso, od Indo adusto;
O che produca pur nel molle grembo
De' Sabei fortunati aprica terra . . .
Nè cassia manca, o l'odorato acanto,
Nè dell' incenso lagrimose stille,
E di tenero nardo i nuovi germi. †

The first five of these verses seem to me to have a wonderful resemblance to the manner of Milton. The latter three are also much in his style, as he often uses the verb *wanted*, in the way here employed by Tasso.

His stature reach'd the sky, and on his crest
Sat horror plum'd; nor *wanted* in his grasp
What seem'd both spear, and shield. ‡

Nor gentle purpose, nor endearing smiles
Wanted, nor youthful dalliance. ¶

The following is the other example, to which I would request the reader's at-

* *Giorn. Quinta*, vol. V. p. 57. † *Giornata Quinta*, vol. V. p. 70.
‡ *P. Lost*, IV. 988. ¶ *P. Lost*, IV. 337.

No. XXXV. tention, as I think it can hardly be doubted that Milton had the passage of Tasso in his mind while composing it.

——Tralascio di Sfingi, e di Centauri;
Di Polifemo e di Ciclopi appresso,
Di Satiri, di Fauni, e di Silvani,
Di Pani, e d' Epipani, e d'altri erranti,
Ch'empier le solitarie inculte selve
D'antiche maraviglie; e quell' accolto
Esercito di Bacco in Oriente,
Ond' egli vinse, e trionfò degl' Indi,
Tornando glorioso a' Greci lidi
Siccom' è favoloso antico grido:
E lascio gli Arimaspi, e quei, ch'al Sole
Si fan col piè giacendo e scherno, ed ombra,
E i Pigmei favolosi in lunga guerra
Colle grù rimarransi, e quanto unquanco
Dipinse'n carta l'Affrica bugiarda.*

——For never, since created man,
Met such embodied force as, nam'd with these,
Could merit more than that small infantry
Warr'd on by cranes: tho' all the giant brood
Of Phlegra with th' heroic race were join'd
That fought at Thebes and Ilium, on each side
Mix'd with auxiliar Gods, and what resounds
In fable or romance, of Uther's son
Begirt with British, and Armoric knights;
And all who since, baptis'd or infidel,
Jousted in Aspramont, or Montalban,
Damasco, or Morocco, or Trebisond;
Or whom Biserta sent from Afric shore,
When Charlemain, with all his peerage, fell
By Fontarabia. †

In some papers of the *Rambler,* on the subject of Milton's versification, Dr Johnson remarks that poet's custom of heaping up a number of softly

* *Giornata Sesta,* vol. V. p. 89.

† *Paradise Lost,* I. 572.

sounding proper names, for which he assigns what he considers to be the reason. "Milton," says he, "whose ear had been accustomed, not only to the music of the ancient tongues, which, however vitiated by our pronunciation, excel all that are now in use, but to the softness of the Italian, the most mellifluous of all modern poetry, seems fully convinced of the unfitness of our language for smooth versification, and is therefore pleased with an opportunity of calling in a softer word to his assistance: for this reason, and I believe for this only, he sometimes indulges himself in a long series of proper names, and introduces them, where they add little but music to his poem: No. XXXV.

——————The richer seat
Of Atabalipa, and yet unspoil'd
Guiana, whose great city Gerion's sons
Call El Dorado.*

The moon—the Tuscan artist views
At evening on the top of Fesolé,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands."†

The critic then proceeds, not very consistently, to blame Milton on account of his roughening his style, by his uncommonly frequent use of elisions. "The great peculiarity of Milton's versification, (says he,) compared with that of later poets, is the elision of one vowel before another, or the suppression of the last syllable of a word ending with a vowel, when a vowel begins the following word. As,

Knowledge—
Oppresses else with surfeit, and soon turns
Wisdom to folly, as nourishment to wind.

"Milton, (adds Dr Johnson,) therefore seems to have somewhat mistaken the nature of our language, of which the chief defect is ruggedness and asperity, and has left our harsh cadences still harsher."¶ The same objection was

* *Paradise Lost*, XI. 408. † *Paradise Lost*, I. 288. ¶ *Rambler*, No. 88.

No. XXXV.

made by the critics to Tasso, and with as little sensibility to true poetical harmony.

The above reflections on the influence of the writings of Tasso, on the genius of Milton, would receive additional evidence, were I to bring together the numerous passages which the commentators of the English poet, have remarked as imitated from the Italian bard. A collection of these, however, although a keen investigation might perhaps add to their number, would lead to a great and unjustifiable prolixity. I fear that already, I shall be thought, to have fallen into the absurdity, which I have censured, of accusing the divine poet as a compiler of centos. No other epic writer, with the exception perhaps of Homer, has borrowed so little as Milton, and my only object has been, to vindicate to the great master, whose life I have related, the second of his honours - the glory of having formed a disciple so renowned. †

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* See vol. I. p. 218.

† The great extent of the last, and of some preceding articles, has prevented me from endeavouring to shew at length, that Milton *before* he went to Italy, was not unacquainted even with the prose writings of Tasso. In the *Messaggiero* of the latter, for example, in which the poet represents himself as conversing with a Spirit, there is a discourse on *influences*, and the Spirit argues that, as the eyes of a beloved female, together with their splendour and graceful motion, have a certain virtue different from the effects that mere light and motion are calculated to produce—as in the mortal eye, rays as it were of mind, mingle with the brilliancy of movement, it is unreasonable to suppose that the bright and eternal Heavens, have only light and motion. "Assai son io pago (says Tasso,) della prova, colla quale tu mi dimostri, che le stelle *piovano quaggiu della lor virtù*, ma ben molto dubito, se l'uomo possa degl' influssi, e degli aspetti loro aver alcuna scienza." The Spirit's argument is founded on the circumstance, that "mescolata co' raggi, passa dagli occhi della donna amata, nel petto del' amatore, alcuna virtù diversa dalla luce non dependente da essa, o dal moto." This cannot fail to suggest the lines of Milton, in his *L'Allegro*,

> With store of ladies, whose *bright eyes*
> *Rain influence*, to judge the prize.

The whole purport, nearly, of the Spirit, in this long dialogue, is to explain to Tasso, the nature and office of *Demons*, or good subordinate Spirits. He represents them with much detail, as *Messengers* of Heaven, who, as in their *peculiar and proper element*,

> ——live inspher'd
> In regions mild of calm, and serene air.

This is the very account which the *Dæmon* in *Comus*, [in the Cambridge MS. of this Masque, the

No. XXXVI.—P. 297.

OF THE GERUSALEMME CONQUISTATA.

The *Gerusalemme Conquistata* is a poem of such extent, and Tasso himself seems to have entertained such an opinion of its merit, that it will be proper to enter into some detail upon the subject. The first indistinct plans of the author concerning it, are contained in the following letter to Sig. Lorenzo Malpigli, written at Mantua in 1586.* No. XXXVI.

"I wrote to you yesterday, almost in the dark, but this morning, the new day has enlightened my eyes and my mind, so that I shall now reply to the

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Attendant Spirit is throughout named *Dæmon*, and in the stage directions, it is said always, *Dæmon enters—Dæmon sings*,] gives of his abode and office, in his prologue. In the same opening speech, the Attendant Spirit speaks of

> The crown that Virtue gives
> After this mortal change, to her true servants,
> Among the *enthroned Gods* on sainted seats:
> Yet some there be———

As Tasso's Spirit says, "voi mortali tutti traete il corpo dalla terra, alcuno de quali, dopo che l'anima sua è salita in cielo, per valore, e per grazia impetrando di esser *riposto nel numero degli Dei.*" Other resemblances might be stated, which would seem to shew that Milton was early acquainted with this Dialogue. This, at least is certain, that doctrines similar to what it contains, made a powerful impression on his fancy; and that visions, such as are delineated by the Italian poet in this Dialogue, were the favourite creations of his youthful mind. *He*, also, in his *Penseroso*, wishes to unsphere a Spirit to unfold to him

> What worlds, or what vast regions hold
> The immortal mind that hath forsook
> Her mansion in this fleshly nook;
> *And of those Demons, that are found*
> *In fire, air, flood, or under ground,*
> *Whose power hath a true consent*
> *With Planet, or with element.*

* *Oper.* vol. IX. p. 315.

No. XXXVI. latter, and most important part of your epistle. And in the first place, I do not recollect my having said any thing of errors in my poem, as I have read only a small part of some cantos since its impression. Nor is it my intention to peruse the whole, till I shall have finished my tragedy, which I believed was to be happily acted; but praised be God for every thing, since it is he who visits us with afflictions, and consoles us in infirmities. But when (to use the common expression) I shall have given it the last hand, I shall attend to the revision, the correction, and enlargement of my *Jerusalem*, which I had deliberated to extend to twenty-four cantos; but afterwards, it has been my intention to add many stanzas to each, or to the greater part of them, that the book may be respectable for its size, as well as on account of the beautiful type, and royal paper. And, although, I have also deliberated to cancel many things which seem superfluous, and to alter others, still the diminution will be much less considerable than the augmentation. Among the things which must be changed is the Episode of Sophronia in the second canto, (as I was formerly advised by Sig. Flamminio, and by Sig. Barga, most learned men) and the voyage of the two Knights in the ship of Fortune; and many things which I say of Tartarus, and of the natural Magician, since the allegory is rather gentile than otherwise, and I must search for one more accommodated to our religion. For the same reason I may, in the names of the Dæmons, alter those of the Gentiles, (although the example was set by Dante) and may adopt in their stead, some of those which I read in a very little book, but full of much learning, entitled, *Nuovo Discorso dell'armi, e lacci de i Demoni, ridotto in forma d'arte, dal Reverendiss. Don Giulio Candiotto di Sinigaglia Arcidiacono della Santa Casa in Loreto.* In the dream of Godfrey, also, I shall remove whatever retains the odour of Heathenism, and shall add many things from St Augustin's *City of God*, and from the *Apocalypse* of St John; and the discovery of the lance of Christ, and the pictures of a pavilion, on which is to be storied all the events previous to the sixth year of the war; and the discourse of the archbishop of Jerusalem, (expelled from that city) with Duke Godfrey, and with the other princes, in which he shall depict particularly the state of Asia in those times, such as they are described by William Archbishop of Tyre, and by Paulus Emilius, in their histories. Perhaps, likewise, I shall first add a minute description of Palestine, and touch

upon all the ancient histories and miracles, written in the Old and New Testament, and in the works of Josephus, subjoining many prophecies concerning the kings of Cyprus, and of Jerusalem, and the empire of the Mahometans. It would give me infinite pleasure, if I could add the *Impreses* used at this siege, so that I long to possess a French book, which, I have been told by Sig. Benedetto Manzuolo, treats marvellously of this subject, but he either did not mention the title, or I have now forgotten it. I wish for this, or one of the kind, through the favour of my friends, who ought to procure me a sight of what I have yet been unable to obtain, on account of so many crosses and obstacles of fortune. I wish also for the work of St Gregory the pope, on the *Hierarchies of Angels*, which I have not yet read, and a commentary on the *Apocalypse*, and another on the *Epistles* of St Paul, to arm a mysterious knight with arms of light, or rather one of many mysterious knights, since it is my intention, by means of the allegory, to render all the fable more reverend and venerable.—I shall begin to compose when the warriors go out to fight, hoping much from the felicity of the season, which will invite me with the sweet songs of a thousand nightingales; with the murmurs of a thousand rivulets and fountains; and will cheer me with the sight of the new attired groves." No. XXXVI.

As the criticisms of his revisors and of the academy della Crusca had given him extreme pain, Tasso seems to have resolved to model his new epic in such a manner as that he could not be attacked without sharing the conflict with Homer and with Virgil. Of these two writers, Virgil had in his youth been his favourite; he studied that poet assiduously, and from him he learned compression and majesty of style.* Accustomed, however, to the richness of romantic painting, Tasso considered the *Eneid* as somewhat meagre, a circumstance which he attributes in a great measure to the extent of the subject chosen, since thus, so much being occupied in historical narration, little was left for episode, which is the proper scene for a poet's invention. "Let him (says our bard in his *Discourses*) who prepares the *Materia Nuda* of

* *Life*, vol. I. pp. 101, 217.

No. XXXVI. a poem, take care that the quantity of it be not too great, lest when he arranges the texture of the fable, when he wishes to insert a number of episodes, and to adorn and illustrate things which are simple in their nature, the poem should increase to such an extent as to be cumbrous and perplexing. Such a perplexity must needs be the consequence, when the quantity of the *Nuda Materia* is too great, or else, to avoid this prolixity, the poet will be compelled to shun digressions, and other ornaments essential to a poem, and to remain as it were in the simple and unadorned bounds of history."* Tasso remarks, that the former of these faults, (that of immoderate extent,) has been committed by Boiardo and Ariosto, provided the *Orlando Inamorato* and *Furioso*, are regarded as one poem. On the other hand, he taxes with aridity Lucan, Silius Italicus, and Trissino, and this aridity is owing (he says) to the circumstance of these poets not having selected *one* important incident in a war, which they might have adorned with episodes and inventions of their own; but Lucan chose as his theme the *whole* civil war, Silius the whole second Punic war, and Trissino the whole expedition of Belisarius against the Goths. Thus, their subjects being so ample, no room was left for invention or embellishment, and the productions of these writers resemble gazettes of a campaign. Wonderful in this respect, (continues Tasso) is the judgement of Homer, who, having selected, and proposed as his theme, a subject by no means ample, increased it by episodes, and enriched it with ornaments to a laudable and convenient length. The *matter* of Virgil is somewhat more copious, as his design was to unite in a single poem, what is contained in the two of Homer; yet, still his subject was not of such amplitude as to compel him to fall into either of the above faults. Nevertheless, (adds our bard) he proceeds at times in a manner so restricted as it were, and is so sparing of ornaments, that though in purity and condensation, he be marvellous and inimitable, still, perhaps, his manner has less of the poetic, than the flowery and abundant copiousness of Homer." †

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* *Opere*, vol. V. 497. † *Ibid.*

Notwithstanding this eulogy on the judgement of Homer, in respect of the quantity of subject which he chose to embellish, Tasso does not seem to have had, at the time of the composition of his first *Jerusalem*, a very enthusiastic admiration for the Grecian poet. "They shall find my heart hardened, (says he, speaking of his revisors,) nor shall they be able to convert it wholly into an idolatry for Homer."* "In answer, (says he, in another place,) I may remark, that I persuade myself, that those who read my poem shall perceive that I have perfectly understood the manner of Homer. I have used it indeed very often, although somewhat more sparingly, than has been done by some others of his modern imitators. They will perceive also, that when I have not adopted it, I have not judged it proper to do so, although, perhaps, they may condemn my judgement in this respect.... This I well know, that Virgil as often, and perhaps more frequently than myself, confines himself to narrative, and leaves imitation. And if I had made of a single battle, eight entire books, without interruption, tell me who would have read them?"† No. XXXVI.

When Tasso, however, began the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, (several years after writing the letter to Malpigli, which I have given above,) he was thoroughly subdued into a superstitious respect for Homer. His first object, therefore, was, in imitation of the Grecian poet, to lengthen his poem to twenty-four cantos, "avendo voluto, (says he,) che la mia *Gerusalemme* sia similissima all' *Iliade* nel numero de' libri."§ Not satisfied with altering his

* *Opere*, vol. X. p. 86. "I libri d'Omero," says he, in his *Discourses*, "come che divinissimi siano, pajono nondimeno rincrescevoli." *Opere*, vol. IV. p. 494.

† *Opere*, vol. X. p. 126.

Oh, que ne puis-je en grands vers magnifiques,
Ecrire, au long, tants des faits heroïques!
Homere seul a le droit de conter
Tous les exploits, toutes les aventures,
De les étendre, et de les répéter,
De supputer les coups et les blessures,
Et d'ajouter aux grands combats d'Hector
De grands combats, et des combats encore.

VOLTAIRE.

§ *Opere*, vol. IV. p. 351.

No. XXXVI. own decimal mode of division, into the duodecimal form, into which the *Iliad* and *Odyssey* had been dissected, (a circumstance in which he was afterwards imitated by Milton,) Tasso in other respects followed the footsteps of the Grecian bard, in the most servile manner. In his *Jerusalem Delivered*, he had sometimes been indebted to the father of poetry, and had always improved on him, but in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, we are presented with the thoughts of Homer, as in a translation, and without that admirable naiveté, which is the principal charm of this writer. An example will explain what I mean. In the second book of the *Iliad*, Agamemnon paying a compliment to Nestor, on his wisdom, says,

Αἴ γὰρ, Ζεῦ τε πάτερ, καὶ Ἀθηναίη, καὶ Ἀπολλον,
Τοιοῦτοι δέκα μοι συμφράδμονες, εἶεν Ἀχαιῶν·
Τῷ κε τάχ' ἁμὸν πτόλις περιάμοιο ἄνακτος,
Χερσὶν ὕφ' ἡμετέρῃσιν ἁλοῦσά τε πεφθομένη τε.*

O would the Gods, in love to Greece, decree
But ten such sages, as they grant in thee!
Such wisdom soon should Priam's force destroy,
And soon should fall the haughty towers of Troy.†

Now, it is not easy to see how *ten* such *sages* as Nestor, could have furthered the destruction of Troy, more than nine, eight, or any inferior number, as it is obvious that one sage can give as good counsel, as ten of the same ability. Accordingly, Tasso, when adopting the idea in his *Jerusalem*, has altered it in such a manner, as to give it propriety. When the aged Raimondo offers, in the absence of Tancred, to meet Argantes in single combat, who had proudly defied the whole Christian camp, Godfrey thus addresses him,

O pur' havessi fra l'etade acerba
Dieci altri di valor' al tuo simile,
Come ardirei vincer Babel superba,
E la croce spiegar da Battro à Tile.‡

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* ΙΛΙΑΔ, B. 371. † Pope's *Iliad*, II. v. 443. ‡ Can. VII. st. 69.

O could we boast, bestow'd by love divine,
Ten youthful heroes, with a soul like thine;
Soon should proud Babel fall; and every shore
From Thule's coast, to Ind, the cross adore.

In the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, the exact idea of Homer is adopted, and the other is abandoned:

Non ha pari valor l'etate acerba,
Ma se dieci di *senno* al tuo simile
Avess' io, spererei Menfi superba,
Vincendo, soggiogar da Battro à Tile.*

With regard to the structure of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, it is, as I have remarked, merely a bad copy of the *Iliad*, or at least differs from it but little. We find a Giovanni, who corresponds to Nestor, and who generally repeats almost a translation of the very words of his prototype. Argantes is Hector: he is son of the king of Jerusalem; proposes, like Hector, to his father, to combat with the bravest of the enemies, and the battle is interrupted in a similar manner. Argantes fights at the ships, like Hector he takes leave of his wife, and the whole parting scene is translated from Homer. Similar lamentations are also made over his dead body, as those of Andromeda, Helen, and Hecuba, in the *Iliad*. Riccardo, the Achilles of the new poem,† is provided in Ruperto, with a Patroclus. A quarrel similar, but more decent, is described as taking place between Riccardo and Godfrey, as that in the first book of the *Iliad*, between Achilles, and Agamemnon. Like the Grecian hero, Riccardo retires to his ship; his friend Ruperto, taking pity on the repulsed Christians, borrows his armour, and is slain. This is communicated to Ric-

* Can. VIII. stanza 64.

† Tasso seems to have altered the name of his hero, from Rinaldo, to Riccardo, in compliment to Richard I., of England. The names of the two famous English spouses in the *Jerusalem*, Odoardo and Gildippe, were probably derived from Edward of England, and his queen Philippa. Tasso sometimes makes as great alterations as in this latter case, that his names might be more distinct, or have a better sound.

No. XXXVI. cardo, while he is singing to his lyre, and he laments his friend almost in the very words of Achilles. His mother, Lucia, comes *attended by a number of sea nymphs,* to console him, and repeats nearly a translation of the speech of Thetis. Ambassadors are sent by Godfrey to Riccardo, who present him with vases and other gifts. Lastly, he receives arms from heaven, and kills, like Achilles, the destroyer of his friend!

As the revisors of the *Jerusalem Delivered* had objected to the episodes of that poem, as not sufficiently connected, or as withdrawing the mind too long from the main action, these are now shortened, or removed. That of Olindo and Sophronia, is cancelled; the beautiful pastoral digression concerning Erminia, in the seventh canto, has disappeared; and all those interesting passages where she appears, towards the conclusion of the poem, are taken away. But as it would be tedious to enumerate every thing which is altered for the worse, in this work, I shall confine myself to the changes on the subject of Armida. The great charm of this enchantress, in the *Jerusalem Delivered,* is, that she is pourtrayed as a wonderfully beautiful and interesting girl, while the enchantresses of other poems, are factitious and horrible beings. In the *Gerusalemme Conquistata,* however, the greater part of her winning loveliness is lost, and as Tasso had been accused of making her too fascinating, he transforms her, in his new work, almost into a perfect witch. She is described as daughter of one of the Syrens, in the river Euphrates. She is bound like Acrasia, by the two knights who go in search of Riccardo, after which, except in the episode of the forest, (which, however, is spoiled in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata,)* she no longer appears; and we thus lose some of the most exquisite passages of the first poem. As in the *Jerusalem Delivered,* the remote situation of the palace of Armida had been considered as breaking in upon unity of place, and as interrupting too much, by the time employed in the voyage, the main action of the poem, Tasso, in his reformed work, places it on Mount Lebanon. By this expedient, we lose the delightful voyage of the knights, who go in search of Rinaldo, and every idea of that romantic seclusion which charms us so much in the *Jerusalem,* is utterly destroyed.*

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* Or se vorrem paragonare questo monte (says Tasso, speaking of his changing the situation of

In making some of the foregoing alterations, Tasso had been actuated by what he believed to be a religious principle,* and from a similar laudable motive, he removed from his new poem, whatever might have given the most strictly orthodox occasion to cavil. Unfortunately it happens generally on such occasions, that what he gains in point of doctrine, he loses on the side of poetry, and sometimes of humanity. In the *Jerusalem Delivered*, (for example,) Tancred thus addresses Argantes, who is fainting with his wounds, towards the conclusion of their combat. No. XXXVI.

"Cedimi huom forte; ò riconoscer voglia
Me per tuo vincitore, ò la fortuna;
Nè ricercò da te trionfo, ò spoglia:
Nè mi riserbo in te ragione alcuna."
Terribile il pagan più che mai soglia
Tutte le furie sue desta, e raguna.
Risponde, hor dunque il meglio haver ti vante?
Et osi di viltà tentare Argante?" †

In the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, Tancred's speech is thus changed:

Cedimi huom forte, e riconoscer voglia,
Non la vittoriosa alta fortuna,

Armida's palace, from the Fortunate Isles, to Mount Lebanon,) a quel del mondo nuovo per tutte queste cagioni (some mystical speculations,) il Libano sarà più opportuno, e ancora per l'opportunità della guerra, nella quale Riccardo si trova quasi presente, e sul fatto può dar ajuto agli amici. .... Oltre a ciò non era convenevole, che in un poema, fatto ad imitazione dell'Iliade d'Omero, si leggessero cosi lunghi e favolosi errori frapposti nella guerra sacra, e l'unità ancora del luogo doveva concorrere con quella dell'azione. *Opere*, vol. IV. pp. 324, 363.

* Molti de' moderni (writes Tasso, of his new poem,) l'hanno ricercato [diletto] co' lamenti amorosi, o fatti in morte degli amanti, fra quali posso essere annoverato Io medesimo; giudico nondimeno, che si debba schivare in si fatte querele il soverchio; e tutto quello, che di languido e d'effeminato si può vituperare nell' amorose passioni; però in questa parte, con giudizio assai maturo, ho voluto moderar me stesso, ed il mio poema, concedendo a' moderni poeti la vanissima laude di un' affetata piacevolezza. *Opere*, vol. IV. p. 368. So (says Tasso, in a letter to Cardinal Alessandrino,) che alcuni concetti amorosi nella poesia, sono quasi veleno tra preziosissimi cibi. Io purgherò il veleno. Vol. IX. p. 117.

† Can. XIX. stanza 21.

No. XXXVI.

Ma'l vero Dio: che più onorata spoglia
Acquistar non potrai sotto la Luna:
Terribile, &c.*

Tasso has made great use of his *Gerusalemme Liberata*, as a quarry of materials for his new structure, but he uses the terminating words of the verses of the first poem, as a kind of *bouts rimés*, to be differently filled up. His passion for alteration appears not only in the almost constant change of epithets, but even of the names of such persons, as are enumerated only for the purpose of being slaughtered. Innumerable instances of this might be quoted, but one example may suffice.

Non era il fosso di pallustre limo,
(Che no'l consente il loco) ò d'acqua molle;
Onde l'empieno, ancor che largo ed imo,
Le pietre, e i sassi, e gli arbori, e le zolle;
L'audacissimo Alcasto intanto il primo
Copre la testa, ed una scala estolle.†

This, in the *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, is altered as follows;

Era quel fosso di palustre limo,
O pur d'acqua, che stagni, umido e molle;
Ma l'han ripieno, ancorchè largo, ed imo,
Le pietre, i tronchi, e le tenaci zolle:
L'arditissimo Ermanno intanto, il primo
Scopre la testa, ed una scala estolle.‡

But if the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* be inferior to the *Liberata*, in every thing that relates to conduct, it is at least as much below it in poetry of style. This, indeed, was naturally to have been expected, as it has been often remarked, that it is in this respect, that the decay of a writer first appears remarkable. Tasso has indeed endeavoured, in his new production, to shun

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* Can. XXIII. stanza 100. † *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Can. XI. st. 34. ‡ Can. XIV. st. 55.

those elisions which are frequent in his first poem, and which some persons had blamed as an imperfection, but had blamed with little critical discernment, since in a language so soft as the Italian, they are necessary to give a proper strength and dignity to style. These elisions, our poet has taken pains to shun in his *Gerusalemme Conquistata*; but nothing can be more remarkable than the inferiority in all respects, of the colouring in this, to that of the former work. An example will suffice to explain my meaning. When Eustathius, the brother of Godfrey, meets Armida approaching for the first time the Christian camp, he addresses her (in Mr Hoole's translation,) as follows. No. XXXVI.

"Say damsel! (if thou bear'st a *mortal* name,
For sure thou seem'st not of terrestrial frame!
Since Heaven ne'er gave to one of Adam's race
So large a portion of celestial grace!)
What fortune bids thee to our camp repair?
What fortune sends to us a form so fair?
What art thou? If of heavenly lineage say,
So let me, prostrate, rightful homage pay." *

The reader is requested to remark how superior in beauty, the answer in the *Gerusalemme Liberata* is, to that in the *Conquistata*.

Risponde; il tuo lodar troppo alto sale;
Nè tanto in suso il merto nostro arriva.
Cosa vedi, Signor, non pur mortale,
Ma già morta à i diletti, al duol sol viva:
Mia sciagura mi spinge in loco tale,
Vergine peregrina, e fuggitiva.
Ricorro al pio Goffredo, e in lui confido;
Tal và di sua bontate intorno il grido. †

This stanza is, in the reformed poem, altered as follows.

Risponde: al tuo pensier bellezza eguale;
Non ho, nè merto alle tue lodi arriva;

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* *Jerusalem Delivered*, B. IV. *v.* 272. † *Gerusalemme Liberata*, can. IV. st. 36.

No. XXXVI.

Donna vedi, Signor, non pur mortale,
Ma già morta al diletto, al dolor viva.
Me sospinge del Cielo ira fatale,
Vergine peregrina, e fuggitiva:
Rifuggo al pio Goffredo, e'n lui confido
Tal va del suo valore intorno il grido.*

Such is the difference between the first and second production of this poet; and it may furnish a strong lesson both of the fallacy of criticism, and of the impropriety of altering and mutilating a work which has attained a certain degree of perfection. Tasso, as I have remarked in the *Life*, wrote a *Giudizio*, or judgement on the superior excellence of the last *Jerusalem* to the first. This work consists of two books; a third was to be added, but seems never to have been executed.

Tasso boasts in the first book of this *Giudizio*, that in his new poem he had attended more scrupulously to history than in his former one; that, for example, instead of the episode of Olindo and Sophrònia, he has described the state of Palestine at the time of the first crusade, and given a catalogue of the Mahometan princes, by whom its provinces were then governed. † But what he principally values himself upon, is his attention to Allegory in his *Jerusalem Conquered*. "In the reformation of my fable, says he, I have sought to make it more agreeable to truth than it formerly was, conforming in many things with history. To history I have added allegory in such a

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* *Gerusalemme Conquistata*, can. V. st. 38.

† How anxious Tasso was about natural and historical truth, appears from the following passage of a letter written at Mantua in 1586. "In Bergamo non credo, che siano Ebrei Levantini; ma tornando in Ferrara, vorrei qualche informazione del Regno di Damasco," vol. IX. p. 270. and again, p. 480, he writes thus in a letter dated Mantua, 23d July, 1586. "Vorrei accrescere il mio poema, e fare alcune mutazioni, e fra l'altre mutare il nome d'Idraote Re di Damasco, e prenderne alcuno di quei Re, che sono nominati nell' istoria; ma non vorrei Norandino, o altro sì fatto, celebre per molte istorie, e molte favole, ma qualche nome più raro, e meno udito. Laonde prego V. S. che oltre quello, ch'ella medesima potrà fare per ajutarmi, e favorirmi in questo particolare, voglia dirne una parola, in mio nome, all' Eccellentiss. Sig. Don Cesare d'Este, ed al Signor Ambasciatore, acciocchè mandino a chiamare qualche Ebreo Levantino, e se n'informino minutamente. Signor mio, ho gran voglia, che questo negozio Damasceno mi riesca felicemente; però il raccomando a V. S. tanto teneramente quanto posso."

No. XXXVI.

manner, that, as in the world and nature there exists no vacuum, so nothing in my poem is left to vanity, but I have filled each part, even the most minute, with a hidden and mysterious sense." * After a dissertation on the allegories of Homer, Tasso enumerates those which he himself has introduced into his new work from scripture and the mystical divines. "In my poem, (says he) I have feigned Armida, the daughter of a Syren, because (as we read in Isaiah, and also in St Jerome, and other holy divines) daughters were born to the Syrens in the river Euphrates, which divides the famous city of Babylon. Nor do the Syrens and their daughters signify any thing in my opinion, but seducing women, or perhaps sensual pleasures themselves, which soothing the sentiments with sweetest harmony, lull the soul that is captivated and entranced by delight.... I have feigned in my stanzas, that the Syrens sung a lay similar to those things, which, in conformity with the false doctrine of Epicurus, we read in Lucretius. In this way Riccardo is taken, and is then conducted by the twins Sleep and Death, not into the middle of the Dead Sea, but upon the loftiest summit of Mount Lebanon, because the mountain signifies ambition and pride; and the cedars of Lebanon under which he is placed to recline, usually signify power." † This is certainly sufficiently absurd, but is reasonable in comparison with some of the strange metaphysical dreams which Tasso here represents himself as having taken from the mystical divines, and placed in his *Conquistata.* ‡ He is particularly satisfied with the twentieth canto, which comprises Godfrey's vision of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and which, indeed, contains some very sublime passages, chiefly versified from the book of *Revelations,* "Nell' esposizione sola del vigesimo canto (says he) si potessero scrivere molti libri." ¶

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* *Opere*, vol. IV. p. 306.

† *Ibid*, p. 323.

‡ See particularly *Oper.* vol. IV. p. 329. "Or che lasciamo," &c. Tasso here quotes a stanza from his *Ger. Conquistata* which shows that Milton's "dark with excessive bright," is by no means a new idea.

Sovra gli occulti lumi, e i lumi ardenti
E l'alto suon dell' armonia superna,
Caligine è lassù d'ombre lucenti,
In cui s'involve il Re, ch'il ciel governa....
Quivi Iddio pose in fulgide tenebre,
E'n profondo silenzio alte latebre.

Opere vol. IV. p. 332. From the period of the commencement of his misfortunes, Tasso had devoted much of his time to theological studies. In a letter dated Mantua, 25th March, 1587, he

No. XXXVI. After having discoursed on history and allegory, Tasso in the second book of his *Giudizio*, proceeds to treat of the fable, which he asserts is more perfect in his new, than in his former poem. This superiority he attempts to establish, principally on the circumstance of his having in his *Jerusalem Conquered* scrupulously imitated Homer. "I have added, says he, the person of John the Admiral, in imitation of that of Nestor, celebrated by Homer; Ruperto of Ansa, coincides with Patroclus; by the two Roberts, I have expressly represented the two Ajaxes in the defence of the ships; In William, prince of the English archers, I have imaged Teucer; in Tancred, Diomede, in Raimondo, Ulysses; although there still is wanting a passage containing a nocturnal assault, in which this resemblance should be more expressly characterised. Riccardo is in valour equal to Achilles, Loffredo is the image of Phœnix; * the seven Neapolitan leaders, are as it were portraits of the captains of the Myrmidons; Baldwin has some similitude with Menelaus; and Godfrey in dignity, is equal to Agamemnon, but in virtue surpasses him beyond comparison. On the other side, Ducalto is more like Priam than Aladine was; in multitude of sons, he also resembles him; of whom Argantes is the representative of Hector and Celebino of Troilus. Solyman, who, on invitation, brings his aid, in this at least is like Sarpedon, and in valour far surpasses him. Assaguorre may be considered as representing the person of Antenor; Lugeria, and Funebrina are formed in imitation of Andromeda and Hecuba. Nicea corresponds to Helen, at least in the enumeration of the Christian princes who are pointed out by her, and named to the aged king, who from the tower contemplates the combat of his son. In this manner, in imitation of Homer, I have enlarged the extent, amplified the variety of texture, and encreased the number of persons introduced." †

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says. "Gl'impedimenti sono stati molti, e specialmente quelli de' miei studj, non dico di poesia, o d'arte oratoria, a' quali non attendo già, molti anni sono, ma di Teologia: e questi eran necessarissimi per due cagioni; l'una accioche io non andassi al bujo per tutto il cammino della mia vita; l'altra, per corregger l'opere mie." Vol. IX. p. 505.

* It is not improbable, I think, that the name of Loffredo was bestowed on Riccardo's instructor, in compliment to Manso's mother.—See *above*, p. 285.

† *Opere*, vol. IV. p. 356. I know not whether it has been remarked, that Tasso seems to have had a design of introducing himself among the heroes of this poem, under the very unappropriate

No. XXXVI.

In the course of his comparison between his old and new poem, Tasso takes the rules of Aristotle as his guide, and he affirms, that in his latter work these rules are more deeply studied; the unities of action and of place better observed; and the episodes more strictly connected. Whether this be true, I shall not examine; but if it be, nothing can demonstrate more clearly the absurdity of estimating a poetical work *merely* by its servile conformity to a certain set of critical precepts. The province of criticism is not to confine genius to one narrow and trodden path, but to point out the roads that have been taken by others, and (guided by experience and reason) to set up land-marks, beyond which it may be dangerous to stray. Poetry addresses man not merely as a rational being, but as possessed of curiosity and sensibility; and could it be proved that the Aristotelian rules are absolutely the most reasonable which could be devised, still the strictness of adherence to them would not form a complete and just criterion of the value of two poems. It would be necessary to enquire in the first place, how much and how far reason might be sacrificed to novelty, and the rules of art to the pleasure of variety. After this, it would be requisite to examine the two poems with respect to

---

designation of Tranquillo. Enumerating in the first canto of the *Conquistata*, the warriors about to be employed in the atchievement of the siege he says, stanza 84.

Di Nola Unfredo, e di Salerno Enrico,
Curzio, e Crustan di Conca, e di Gaeta,
E di Sorrento, a' dolci studii amico,
Tranquillo, il qual cangiò pensieri, e meta,
E lasciando la cetra, e'l pletro antico,
Onde l'ire, e'l furor dell' alme acqueta,
Prese elmo, e lancia, pur coll' alto carme
Talora ei canta i duci invitti, e l'arme.

In canto VI. st. 105, We find, " Tranquillo, a' dolci studii amico," among the champions upon whom the lot falls to follow Armida; and in canto X. st. 102. he is killed by Clorinda.

Passa Clorinda intanto al buon Tranquillo
Il core, e rivi trae caldi e sanguigni;
Perch' a femminea mano il Ciel sortillo,
S'aspetti ha pur si feri, e si maligni?
Te pianser poi gli scogli, e'l mar tranquillo,
Del bel Sorrento, e di Sebeto i Cigni;
E s'udir ne' bei monti, e'n sull' arene
I lai, quasi di Ninfe, e di Sirene.

No. XXXVI.

their influence on the passions and the heart; their power of agitating the soul, or of soothing it to peace. Thus, were we to estimate the ascendancy which two young beauties are calculated to exert over the mind, it would be absurd to endeavour to determine this merely by lines and compasses; by the nearness of their approximation to the Venus de' Medici, or any similar exquisite model. The one who had the advantage in this respect, might be dull and inanimate; she might be in possession merely of well-ranged lifeless features; while the other, though some of her traits were irregular, might be, on this very account, more graceful and fascinating.

Notwithstanding the defects which I have enumerated, the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* is not without its beauties. I have already mentioned that there are some noble stanzas in the twentieth canto; and some very happy verses may be found throughout the poem. To the commentator of the *Jerusalem Delivered*, it would furnish a subject of very important reflections, and indeed, by him who should reasonably aspire to this high honour, all the various writings of Tasso must be profoundly meditated. Already several commentaries have been written upon the *Jerusalem*, but a work is still wanted which shall explain the allusions, and shall endeavour to do justice to the beauties both of art and nature in that enchanting poem.

It was my intention to have closed these volumes with an account of the different editions of the *Jerusalem* and *Aminta*, of the various commentators of the former of these poems; its translators, and their translations. Should, however, at some future period, my residence be fixed in the country, where distance from public libraries precludes the attempt of a work of great and various research, it is my purpose occasionally to beguile the hours by writing a commentary on the *Jerusalem*, with a translation of that poem into octave rhyme. For such an undertaking, the materials which I possess, or could obtain, are ample; and to such a work, notices of editions, commentators, and translators, would more properly belong than to the present, which has already grown to an unexpected magnitude.

THE END.

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INDEX.

A

Addison, II. 261, 266.

Akenside, verses of, on Tasso's dependence, II. 281.

Alamanni, unsuccessful as an epic poet, I. 82.

Alanus, a persecutor of Tasso, II. 116, 213, *seq.* 232, 234, 236.

Albani Cardinal, I. 179; letter of Tasso to, on the completion of his *Jerusalem*, 197; letter to the Duke of Ferrara in behalf of Tasso, II. 11; kind letter of, to the poet, 48, 53; on the death of Leonora of Este, 70. Also a pastoral, I. 180.

Aldobrandino Card. Cynthio, exhorts Manso to write the life of Tasso, *Pref.* xii; his kindness to Tasso, II. 231; has the *Jerus. Conq.* dedicated to him, 295; procures Tasso the promise of a triumph, 317; his last interview with the poet, 328.

Aldus the younger, prints the *Aminta*, I. 170; visit Tasso, II. 106; his account of the admirable Creature, 437; little dependence to be placed on, 438, and *seq.*

Alembert D', quoted, *Pref.* xxiii. 90, 138; his opinion of a compressed style, 213; picture of envy, II. 120.

Alison Mr. I. 149.

Allegory, in epic and romantic poems; remarks on, I. 277, 400; and *seq.* attention of Tasso to, in his *Jer. Con.* II. 488.

Allusions, see *Epic.*

Amadigi, romantic poem of B. Tasso, begun, I. 91; its progress, 92, finished, 93, already 95, revised by Speroni, 80; publication, 96, and cause of its want of success, 97, and *seq.* numerous descriptions of mentioned, 102; quoted 45.

Amadis, romance of, remark on its origin, I. 64.

Aminta, allusions in to the festivals on Tasso's arrival at Ferrara, I. 181; when perhaps first conceived, 141; Tasso appears under the name of Tirsi in 144, 177, 200, finished 170; not a favourite of its author, *ib.* detailed examination of, and of the *Pastor Fido*, 300, and *seq.* style of admired by Guarini, 372; remark concerning, II. 168.

Anastasio, quoted I. 14.

Antonmaria Sylvio, a reviser of the Jerusalem, account of, I. 240; his bigotted rigour, 247, 248, 261, 274, 280; apologetical letter of Tasso to, 282, and *seq.* its little effect, 289, and *seq.*

Aquinas St Thomas, II. 107, 198.

Archangelus, see *Mercenarius.*

Arcipanda, a tragedy, II. 307.

Ariosto his *Sonnetto* a pastoral drama, I. 141.

Ariosto, offence given by his catalogue of friends, I. 42; gave grace to disorder, 50; overclouded his successors, 57; idolatrous admiration of, 88, 100; his verses on the study of Law, 93; properly uses introductory verses, 102; his literary diligence, 210; why not patronized by Leo X. 230; friend of Cardinal Ippolito, 230; emulation he excited in Tasso, 303, II. 208, 324; argument to his poem offered by Tasso, 62; comparison of his *Orlando* with the *Jerusalem*, 131, and by Segni, 141; his fable concerning Fortune's pensioners, 268; verse of, blamed, 340.

——— Horace compliments Tasso, I. 303; writes arguments to the *Jerusalem*, II. 91; wishes it not to be compared with the *Orlando*, 152.

Aristotle, his poetics commended by Milton, I. 185; his great influence, 206; his obscurity, 211; conformity of the *Jerusalem* to his rules, 239; improper to consider such conformity as the sole test of excellence, II. 4.

Armida, her fascinating beauty, I. 377, II. 363; this charm lost in the *Jerus. Con.* 284; her gardens, I. 175, 378.

Arnaldo Ferro, his account of Crichton's insanity, II. 285.

Augustine St. quoted, I. 402; a favourite of Tasso, II. 107.

B

Baron Lords, *Prop.* ii. I. 68, 403, II. 363.

Bellay, I. 109, 171.

Barbara of Austria, Duchess of Ferrara, her first entrance into that city, I. 129; her death, 175.

Bargo Angelio da, a revisor of the *Jerus. lib.* account of, I. 260.

Bayle, I. 212; his account of Dempster, II. 193.

Beattie, his preference of the *Jerusalem* to the *Orlando*, and mistake of, II. 161.

Bede Mr. his notice of a note on a copy of Virgil, II. 347.

Belvegardio, a palace of the Duke of Ferrara, I. 225.

Benivieni Lucretia, Tasso incommoded by, I. 344, 345; false narrative, 618.

Bembo Paul, a commendatory of the *Jerus. lib.* I. 30, 110, 208; his remark on the epithets in the *Jer. Con.* II. 210; on Tasso's description of the Devil, 304.

Boccaccio, his style not approved by Tasso, I. 199.

Boccalini, his satire on Crichton, II. 344.

Boileau, II. 360.

Bolognetti, an Italian epic writer, I. 109.

Bojardo, I. 80, 137; beautiful prefaces of Berni in the *Innamorato* of his poem, 277, 338.

Boniface, quoted, I. 82, 102.

Brunswick house of, allied to that of Este, I. 121, 122, 5.

Bruscoli Jerome, novel of, concerning Tasso, II. 348.

Buchanan George, II. 415, 442.

Burnet, his opinion of a passage in Tasso's concerning James I. of Scotland, II. 314.

Burns, origin of his despondence, I. 48; his mistaken idea of independence, 102; re-

marks concerning, 180, 339; his jealous pride, II. 193.

C.

Calvin, I. 129.

Camillo Camillo, publishes a continuation of the *Jerusalem*, II. 114; ridiculous story told on this subject, 116.

Camoens, his fiction of the isle of Venus, I. 387, and see; not imitated by Tasso, 390; his absurd mythology, 403; former neglect and present fame of, II. 61; personal, 362.

Cardan, II. 101, 177, 349.

Casa, character of his poetry, II. 373.

Catherine Sforza, friendship of, for, and of T. Tasso, I. 172; strange letters of Tasso to, II. 401, 405; his account of that poet's death, 629, 631, 633.

Cato, counsels of, Tasso to, II. 68, 407.

Cavalier, his beautiful picture of an infant, I. 37.

Cavaliere Signora, dispute with Tasso, I. 167.

Cellini Benvenuto, his account of the Ferrarese, I. 345; his visions, II. 173.

Cervantes, quoted, I. 53; his opinion of Amadis, 63.

Chaucer, quoted, I. 102, 183; remarks by, on the influence of chivalry on poetry, 389.

Chapelain, quoted, II. 127.

Charles IX. his verses to Ronsard, I. 145; receives Tasso graciously, 161; his character and death, 168.

Chevreau Abbé de, a biographer of Tasso, quoted, I. 103, II. 193.

Chorier Alain, quoted, I. 180.

Chaucer, his use of rythm royal, II. 305.

Chivalry, rise of, I. 74; education and initiation of the knights, *ib.* their courtesy, superstition, and proclivity to love, 75, and see; its effects on poetry, 81, 388.

Cicero, his opinion of Aristotle's style, I. 213; why he wrote in the form of dialogue, II. 92; his criterion of a sound mind, 179.

Cimbrian, their decision on an internal council, II. 241.

Cimone, Vita di, by Tasso, II. 370; verses of Tasso to, 380; his gracious reception of the poet, 600; settles a pension on him, 620; at the Ferrara, 814.

Cleves, *Princess de*, hero of that novel, I. 102.

Concepoli, steward of the Duke of Ferrara, I. 314, 315, 343; II. 98, 99.

Collins, his beautiful verses on Tasso, II. 309.

Combat, the Judicial, I. 72.

Commandine, teaches Tasso mathematics, I. 50.

Comparet remarks of, on the biography of a great man, *Preface* xxv; on the subjugation of Greece by the Turks, 108; on the character of the Duchess of Guise, 182; remark of, on insanity, 322; on envy, II. 136.

Constantine, a dear friend of Tasso, II. 168, 169, 210, 223, 382, 470; last letter of the poet to, 620.

Corayer, remarks of, on biography, Preface xxvii; opinion of his despondency, 28.

Correggio

Cavalcanti, disputes Tasso, II. 160, 175, 176.
Cervantes, quoted, II. 202.

G

Galeani, his work concerning Tasso, I. 195.
Gandolfo, visited by Milton, I. 51; writes a discourse on the comparative merits of Tasso and Ariosto, 2 6, 375; why he adopted the mode of dialogue, II. 52.
Genius, necessity of labour to, I. 55; tormenting the young, 93; early manifestations of peculiarity, 100; facility of the gifted, 101; [illegible], 103; unbending dignity of, shewn when young, 104; encouraged, 170; effect of, in increasing misery, 181, and *seq.* 207.
Gentili, Scipio, a commendation of the *Jerusalem*, II. 181, 165.
Geraldo, see *Tasso*.
Gibbon, his account of Turpin, I. 60; remarks on his work, 104; his account of the method of getting at Ferrara, 142; of the temple of love, 180; of Rinaldo, 183; on submitting a MS. to criticism, 206; quoted, 340; his opinion that love was the cause of Tasso's madness, 307; remarks Tasso's invention of history in his poem, II. 170.
Giraldi, his romance poems, I. 90; quoted, 134.
Goethe, his *Tasso* quoted, I. 136; beautiful passages of, 340.
Gokoon, quotations from his *Torquato Tasso*, I. 42, 338; II. 129, 130.
Gondolino, of Venice, sings the *Jerusalem*, II. 134, 136.
Gonzago, Ferrante, invites Tasso to Mantua, I. 299; kindness to him, II. 98, 123, 317, 329.
Gonzago, Scipio, a dear friend of Tasso, I. 116, 117, 138, 160; is desirous Tasso should leave Ferrara, 199; one of the revisors of the *Jerusalem*, 230; letters to, on this subject, chap. ix. x. xi. *passim*; love of Tasso to, 258; visits him, II. 98; letter concerning the Crusca, 185; lauds the attack of Jerusalem, 103; created cardinal, 229, 448; his death, 298; analysis of his letters and discourse of Tasso to, 316, and *seq.*
——— Vincenzo, prince of Mantua, his kindness to Tasso, II. 42, 140; dedication of a dialogue to, 52, 140; visits Tasso, obtains his release, 170, and 176; succeeds his father, 202; dedication to, 205; remarks on his character, and on the probability that he murdered Crichton, 240, and *seq.*
Gray quoted, I. 166; his opinion of Ariosto, 211; account of an Italian ode, II. 202; quoted, 280; admires Tasso, 360.
Gregory XIII., I. 212; compliments to, in the *Jerusalem*, 293.
Guarini, Battista, account of, I. 110, 322, 324, 343, 345, 360; a friend of Tasso, 190; probable cause of Alphonso's persecution of, 208; quarrels with Tasso, 360, 410; borrows from the *Aminta*, 382, 410; *Pastor Fido*, 180, 343; compared with the *Aminta*, 382; letter on the death of Leonora of Este, II. 131; quoted 251; visit of, to Tasso, 100; quoted, 128; on the death of Tasso, 330.

Guesclin, Bertrand du, I. 109.
Guise, the family of, its affinity to that of Este, I. 102; attachment of Tasso to, 170, 332; murder of two princes of, 199, 352.

H

Halles, Lord, II. 436.
Hallam, Mr, quoted, II. 87, 104.
Hanley, Mr, *Pref.* 12; xxxiii, 44, 388; II. 17, 231, 239, 461, 467, 470.
Hatherd, Lord, quoted, I. 340.
Homer, quoted, I. 43; derived assistance from antecedent writers, 50; in the commencement of fiction, 82; quoted, 149; considers the richness of the Odyssey, 207; remarks on, 474; his allegories, 487; beautiful [illegible] in his [illegible], 515; his mode of praising, 561; remarks on, I. 50, 480, 481; slavish imitation of, by Tasso, in his *Gerusalem Conq. dell*, and *seq.*
Hooker, Mr, 102, 195, 352, 389, translation of part of a sermon, 240; censures a passage of the *Jerus.* as abrupt, 330; remark of, 331; his merits as a translator, 332; mistakes a passage in the *Jerus.* 397; remark of, II. 200; defends the *Jerusalem*, 202.
Hôpital, chancellor, quoted, I. 127.
Horace, on the immortality conferred by poets, I. 74; quoted, 177; verses concerning Hannibal, II. 50; quoted, 180, 446.
Hostage, A. de, quoted, I. 158; of the golden rose, II. 303.
Howe, recommends the *Epigonion*, I. 340; paraphrases the Syrens' song, of Tasso, 347.
Hurd, Dr, remark of, on Tasso's notions, I. 246.

I

Imperialis, his account of Crichton, II. 295, and *seq.*
Ingegneri, a friend and editor of Tasso, II. 44, 93, 96; assists in the publication of the *Jerus. Con.* 200; publishes Tasso's poem on the creation, 382.
Israeli, I., Mr, quoted, I. 382; II. 141, 455.
Italy favourable to the study of antiquity, I. 24; 26; rendering the ref. the literary [illegible] of, compared with France, 105.

J

Jerusalem Delivered, planned, I. 197; its happy choice as a subject, 116; why adopted by Tasso uncertain, 141, 201; interesting [illegible] his patriotic feelings, 142; first sketch of, 144; resumed, 190; progress of, 192; sketched in prose, 196, 199; progress of, 165, 174, 191; obscure allusions in, explained, 192, 230, 234, 236; letters of Tasso, on the completion of, 195, and *seq.* [illegible] to be revised in Rome, 199; its revision, 201; their descent, 211, 213; objections to the speech of Olindo and Sophronia, 214, 228, 270; defended, 215; considerations too much ornamented, 216; peculiarity of the style of, 217; two revisions of, 219; progress of the second revision, 244, and *seq.*; origin of its name in, 282; cancellations in, 290; defence of the loves and magic in, 294, 296; allegory of, 277, 491; its conformity with the Aristote-

...tian rules of poetry, 373; with history, ... II. 129, 130; a mutilated edition of, published, 73; other editions, 93; acquaintance of, 94; controversy regarding it with the Academy of Crusca, 110, and *seq.*; compared with the *Orlando*, 131 and *seq.*; sung by the Gondoliers, 131, 453; Ode of, not approved by Tasso, 206; remarks on, *ibid.*; compared with the *Gerusalemme*, 207, 428, and *seq.*; most beautiful stanza in the, 348; source of the defects in the, 353; criticisms on, 357, and *seq.*; example of continued harmony in, 360; great author by whom it was admired, 371; and *seq.*

Gerusalemme Conquistata, II. 254, 255; Tasso's fondness for the, 270, 297; published, 303; remarks and description on, 308, 377, and *seq.*

Gibbon, Dr. I. 87; with the dedication of Hoole's *Jerusalem*, 187; remarks of, 368, 372; II. 109, 400, 401, 421; dictates an account of Orcliffian, 427; remarks on Milton's style, 456.

Gods, the W. I. 17, 242; II. 447.

Guido, sonnet by, 438.

H

Hayley, Dr. his memoir of Cheliton quoted, II. 426, 429, 430, 446.

Knights. See Chivalry.

L

Love, General duty of, in Italy, I. 93; sentiments of different poets to, 1, 93, 94.

Leonora. See *Este*.

Leonora, countess of Scandiano, her beauty, I. 237; verses addressed to her by Tasso, 239, and *seq.*; his admiration of her, 239, 385.

Leibnitz, I. 122, 543.

Legion, Mr. I. 83.

Lodoicn, see *Amadis*.

Loffredo, Donna, Manso's mother, persuades Tasso to write a religious poem, II. 285, 400.

Lombardelli, II. 124.

M

Machiavel, Dr. mistakes of, II. 437.

Magic, his theory on love, I. 167.

Malespini, Count, I. 318.

Malespini, Ouc Sig. is addressed by B. Tasso, I. 4, 5, 523; compliment thus received from Tasso, 147.

Manfredi, II. 107.

Manso, his Life of Tasso, *Prop.* 8; remarks of, on the place of Tasso's birth, 11; his account of his infancy, 17; of his mistresses, 238; error of, 264; account of Tasso's meeting with his sister, II. 5; belief of the house of Tasso's loss for Leonora, 12, 78; introduced to Tasso, 225, and *seq.*; his narration of the poet's conversation with a spirit, 228; procures Tasso from the house of the Count of Palena, 282; dialogues on *Friendship*, addressed to, 292; his kindness to Tasso, 300; last parting with, 310; his works, 2; discovers the MS. on *Friendship*, 320; his animosity, 458; Onofrio, 325; wishes to erect a monument to Tasso, 397; his account of the poet's person, 342; his study, 347; continence, 350, 446; his as-

quaintance with Milton, and its consequences, 282, and *seq.*; 459, and *seq.*

Manutius, see *Aldus*.

Marino, his *Adone*, I. 341; quoted, II. 19; his praise of Tasso, 30, 337; acquaintance with Manso and Tasso, 228, 313; his monument, 338.

Marmontel, remark concerning Diderot, I. 144; Rousseau, 302.

Methius, Mr, II. 335.

Mazzoni, I. 185; II. 431.

Medici, fame of their patronage, to what in part owing, I. 122; rivalship between, and the house of Este, 124, 229, 252.

Menage, quoted, II. 348.

Menzini, beautiful verses of, on Tasso, II. 132.

Mercenarius, Archangelus, disputes with Crichton, II. 430.

Mercuriale, Jerome, prescribes for Tasso, II. 110.

Metastasio, of Aristotle's poetics, I. 211, approves the Episode of Sophronia, 215; praises Tasso's style, II. 137; letter of, on the comparative merits of Tasso, and Ariosto, 152; quoted, 157, 206; remarks of, [illegible] rhyme, 303.

[illegible] canzone of Tasso, to the, II. 381.

Metauro, [illegible] prejudiced admiration of

Mickle, Mr, his [illegible], and *seq.*; 402.

Camoens, I. 387.

Millar quoted, I. 78; [illegible] Serassi, I. 16; his ad-

Milton, not named [illegible]ation, 35; studies mathe-

vantages of educ[illegible]ts Galileo, *ibid.* his thirst

matics, 51; [illegible]nd admiration of Dante and

of reading, [illegible]5; quoted, 75, 76; his dislike of

Petrarch, 5[illegible]

law, 94, quoted 96; early peculiarity of his genius, 100, quoted 110, 111; his propensity to love, 142, quoted 185; his opinion of the necessity of labour to genius, 210; his elisions, 218; his garden of Eden, 226, quoted 235; of allegory, 278; his fondness of music, 286; of Plato, 334; proposed punctuation of a passage in his *Paradise Lost*, 364; his confidence in his powers, II. 66, quoted 68; verses on Tasso's madness, 79; imitates a passage of Tasso, 164; not fitted to write tragedy, 205; his verses to Manso, 228, 230, 308, 310, 338; compared with those of Tasso, 231; not a wit, 279; proud, 280; fond of metaphysical research, 285; obligations to Dubartas, 287; his verses on light, 301; imitates Tasso, 361, 365, 489; his sonnets not after the model of Dante, 374; remark concerning, 430; his introduction to Manso, 282, and *seq.* Dissertation on his emulation of Tasso, 450, and *seq.*

Misfortunes, effects of early, on the mind, I. 42.

Molza Tarquinia, I. 299; II. 98.

Montaigne, visits Ferrara, I. 125; II. 74; remarks of, on Tasso's derangement, 92.

Montecatino Antony, an enemy of Tasso, I. 236, II. 32.

Montesquieu, I. 93, 99, 165.

Mosti Augustine, his harsh treatment of Tasso, II. 60.

Muratori, his *Antichità Estensi*, I. 345; his character of Alphonso, 124; his account of the tournaments at Ferrara, 125, 130, quoted 55, 133, 137, 155, 192; accusation

of Leo X. 229; of Montecatino, 237, quoted 317, 346, 347; patronised by the family of Este, 349; anecdote of Tasso, II. 15; remarks on the poet's confinement, 82, 454; character of Vincenzo Gonzaga, 448.

Muretus, I. 164; remark of Tasso concerning, II. 325.

N

Naples, beauties of, II. 227.

Newton, I. 99, II. 90.

Niegoszewio Stanislaus, account of, II. 439.

Nobili Flaminio de, a revisor of the *Jerusalem*, I. 201; his scrupulousness, 213; remark of, 272.

Nores Mousig. de, letter of, concerning Tasso, II. 323.

O

Oddi Father, his whimsical objections to the *Jerusalem*, I. 202; kindness to Tasso, II. 248.

Olindo, see *Jerusalem*.

Orlando Furioso, see *Ariosto*.

Osat Cardinal, quoted, II. 38[illegible], 448.

Ovid, his dislike of law, I. 51; lines on his banishment, 319, quoted II. 61; writes arguments to Virgil, 95.

P

Palaye St. I. 75; remark of, on the decay of tournaments in France, 126.

Palmo Count of, his kindness to Tasso, II. 227, 236, 245, 278; the poet's suspicions of him, 281.

Palingenius, I. 349.

Papio John A. I. 25, 28, 106, II. 190, 220.

Pasquier, misrepresented, II. 427.

Pastor fido, see *Guarini*.

Pastoral comedy invented, and perfected at Ferrara, I. 123, 141.

Pedantry, at the revival of literature, I. 205.

Pellegrino Camillo, a dialogue of, II. 122, 235, 26[illegible].

Petrarch, a favourite of Milton and Tasso, I. 55, 56; his delicate manner of treating love, 59; a friend of the Princes of Ferrara, 346, quoted II. 2, 70, [illegible] 72, 81, 264; his little satisfaction from his triumph, 321, quoted 349; his excellence in lyric poetry, 373, 374.

Philip II. of Spain, his neglect of the *Amadigi*, I. 69, 118.

Philips, his *Splendid Shilling*, II. 472.

Piccolomini, his commentary on the Poetics, I. 213.

Pigna, I. 102; a favourite of Alphonso, 143; his canzoni commented on by Tasso, 144; introduced into the *Aminta*, 145, 178; and *Jerusalem*, 145; death of, 250.

Pinel, quoted, I. 292, 308; II. 16.

Pinelli, I. 202; II. 112.

Place la, quoted, [illegible] 280.

Plato, admiration entertained for his [illegible] epic poets, I. 334; his dial[illegible] by the deeply studied by Tasso, [illegible] gues, II. 50, 55;

Pole Cardinal, I. 46, [illegible] p. 242, 328, 333.

Pope, [illegible] on [illegible] 183; beautiful address [illegible] cacy of sensation, I. [illegible] blance of to Tasso, 138, [illegible] to, II. 120; resem-

Possevino, his history of the [illegible] quoted 243.

[illegible] saga, II. 445, 446, [illegible] house of Gon-

Prior, quoted, I. 185.
Pulci, I. 86.

Q

Quadrio, I. 84.
Quinault, quoted, I. 389; II. 364.

R

Renée of France, Duchess of Ferrara, her character, I. 128, 348.
Renouard, quoted, II. 442, 447.
Rhyme, remarks on, II. 302: why the octave is not our heroic measure, 304.
Richelieu Card. I. 147.
Rinaldo poem of, short time in which it was wrote, I. 96, published 104, quoted 41, 97, 112; detailed remarks on 99, 330, and *seq.*
Rinaldo, painted from Alphonso, II. 192; dignified conduct of, II. 362.
Ritson Mr, I. 80, 81, 83.
Robertson Dr, quoted, I. 26, 73.
Romance, what, I. 80.
Romantic fiction, see *Fiction*.
Ronsard, verses of Charles IX. to I. 158; Tasso introduced to, 164.
Roscoe Mr, *Pref.* xxxiii. 128, II. 444.
Rose, the golden, II. 300.
Rossi Portia, Tasso's mother, I. 6, 13, 23; her unhappiness, 28, 38; retires to a monastery, 30; parting with her son, 31; her death, 36; suspicions of her husband on this head and regrets, 37; his sonnets on her death, 46, 326.
——— Bastiano de, his absurd attack of Tasso, II. 144.
Rousseau, resemblances of to Tasso, I. 302, II. 22, 352; admired Tasso, 368.
Rutherford John, II. 414, 443.

S

Sade Abbé de, quoted, I. 79, 147, 152.
Salviati, leader of the academy of Crusca, his enmity to Tasso, II. 123; dies, 148.
Sanseverino, prince of Salerno, I. 5, 16; chosen ambassador to Charles V. 19; is persecuted, 22; declared a rebel, 23; misfortunes of, 26, 28; dies, 52.
Scalabrino Luca, a friend of Tasso, I. 222.
Sciarra Marco di, a robber, his politeness to Tasso, II. 290.
Scott, Mr, I. 75, 87.
Seneca, poet, quoted, I. 43, 152, II. 321.
Seghezzi, *Pref.* xiv.
Serassi, account of, and of his *Life of Tasso*, Pref. xiii, and *seq.*; remark of on Tasso's place of birth, 14; his catholic orthodoxy, 19; II. 178; his explanation of a name assumed by Tasso, I. 117; his courtly use of a passage in the *Jerusalem*, 132, 350; opinion on the episode of Sophronia, 215; his explanation of a compliment in the *Jerusalem*, 234, contradicts Manso, 238; his imperfect account of the revisions of the *Jerus.* 270, 284; remarks of, on Tasso's love for Leonora of Este, 136, 156; II. 15, 59; his opinion on Tasso's confinement, 88; account of the Sprite, 169; minuteness of, 182, 226, 309; mistakes and reticences of, 199, 202, 222, 225, 273; his ac-

count of the prince of Venosa's music, 313; quoted, *saep.*

Shakespeare, of the use of flagellation, and the loss of memory in madness, II. 87, 104; quoted, 118, 441.

Shenstone, quoted, II. 9; curious verses in honour of, 312.

Sigonius, I. 101, 105, 16.

Sileni, the ancient, I. 338.

Sixtus V. character of, II. 219; Tasso writes verses on, and is introduced to him, 223, 225.

Smellie, remark of, on sensibility, I. 182.

Socrates, curious use of his example made by Tasso, II. 21; his disputations, 51.

Sophocles, I. 244, 268; his *Oedipus*, 247, II. 188, 309.

Sophronia, see *Jerusalem*.

Sorrento, Tasso's birth place, its beauty, I. 7, 8; II. 5.

Southey, Mr, I. 65.

Spenser led astray by *Ariosto*, I. 50; verses of, on the misery of paying court, 63; stanza of, on beauty and bravery, 76; read the *Rinaldo*, 331; his *Faery Queene*, 341; has been wrongly asserted to have preferred Ariosto to Tasso, II. 149; his wonderful admiration of the latter, *ibid.*; I. 379, and *seq.*; his *Bowre of Blisse*, *ibid.*

Speroni, Sperone, account of, I. 10; revises the *Amadigi*, 60; placed in the *Aminta*, under the name of Mopsus, 120, 178, 366; perplexes Tasso with metaphysical objections, 212, 241, 244, 269; visited by Tasso, 235; that poet's anger against him, 251, 270, 281; acquises Tasso of plagiarism, 3[illegible]1.

Staël, Mad. de, her *Corinne* quoted, *Preface*, xviii, 128, 355, 362.

Stewart, Mr, remarks of, I. 144, 339.

Stirling, Earl of, quoted, II. 286.

Strabo, dream of Tasso, concerning a passage in, 227.

Strada, his poem on the lyrist and nightingale, I 242.

Sydenham, quoted, I. 184.

Symmons, Dr, translation by, II. 79; remark of, 284.

T

Tasso, Bernardo, father of Torquato, his birth, I. 2; education 3; sonnet of, on the marriage of his mistress, 4, 325; enters into the service of the prince of Salerno, 6; marries, retires to Sorrento, and begins his *Amadigi*, 7; vicissitudes of, 16, and *seq.*; follows the prince of Salerno, to France, 22, 158; is declared a rebel, 25; goes to reside in Rome, and sends for Torquato, 30; lamentations of, for the loss of his wife, 36, and *seq.*; sonnets on the subject, 46, 326; tries to rescue Cornelia from her uncles, 44, 45; vicissitudes of 47, and *seq.*; finishes and alters his *Amadigi*, 51, 53; resides in Venice, 53; letters concerning his daughter, 57, 58; publishes his *Amadigi*, 62; remarks of, on romantic poetry, 87; on the reputation of Ariosto, 89, 100; compliment paid him in the *Rinaldo*, 97; permits his son to publish this poem, 103; enters the service of Duke William of Mantua, 106; begins a new

poem, 120; considers himself a sweeter poet than his son, 140; dies, 149; reflections on his life, 151; epitaph by his son, 161.

—— Cornelia, sister of Tasso, I. 9, 13, 21, 44; her marriage, 57; losses, 58; poverty, 250; receives her brother, II. 3; second marriage of 98; dies 225.

——— Torquato remarks on his life, *Pref.* his birth, 14; strange circumstances recorded of his infancy, 16; his early progress in learning, 24, 34, 61; religious education, 25, 42; distressful parting with his mother, 31; his studies, and companion at Rome, 33; circumstances which favoured his emulation and progress in poetry, 32, 40, 46, 54, 66, 90, 127, 135, 437, 738, 150; is sent from Rome to Bergamo, 48; resides in Pesaro, 49; in Venice, 54; studies Dante and Petrarch, 55, 56; is sent to Padua to study law, 61, 92; (his opinion of the romance of Amadis, 67; praise and emulation of Ariosto, 89, 91, 303; state of romantic poetry in Italy when he began his career, 87;) becomes disgusted with law, 95, 97; writes his *Rinaldo*, 96; publishes it, 104, (see *Rinaldo*;) studies at Bologna, 106; plans his *Jerusalem*, 107, (see *Jerusalem*;) leaves Bologna, 113; his keen sensibility, 115; returns to *Padua*, and his studies there, 116, and *seq.*; visits his father, 118; is invited to and arrives at Ferrara, 119, 127; recommends himself to the princesses of Este, and is, or professes to be in love with Leonora, 131, 134, 135, 352, 356, (see *Este*, Leonora of,) revisits Padua, 138; his situation and studies, 139; visits his father, 140; becomes enamoured of Lucretia Bendidio, 142, 145; disputes publicly on the subject of love, 146; attends the death-bed of his father, 149; accompanies his patron to France, 158; memorial he leaves of his affairs, 159; his reception in France, 161, and *seq.*; leaves it, 172; is received into the service of the Duke of Ferrara, 173; his joy and gratitude, 174, 367; lectures on geometry, 176; writes the *Aminta*, *ibid.* (see *Aminta*;) visits the Duchess of Urbino, 185; sonnet to her, 186; visits Venice, and on his return sickens, 194; is dissatisfied with, and proposes to leave Ferrara, 198, 232, 255; tampering of the Medici for this purpose, 252, 257, 317, 319; sends his poem to be revised in Rome, and his subsequent regrets, 199, 207, 248, 272; visits Padua, 202; perplexities on account of the objections of his revisors, 215, 219; exhaustion, *ibid.* suspicions, 221; frequent headaches, 223; intense application, 226; imprudently visits Rome, 224, 252; returns, 236; his verses to the Countess of Scandiano, 239, 285; perplexities on the second revision of his poem, 243, and *seq.*; is made historiographer of the family of Este, 251, 261; awkward situation in which this places him, 252; his perplexity, 254; apologetical letter, etc.; its little effect, 260, and *seq.*; fond of popular applause, 267; his impatience to publish his *Jerusalem*, 220, 239, compelled to mutilate that poem, 272, 274, 279; resolves to allegorise his poem 277, 401; perplexi-

ties at the close of the revision, 281; summary of his letters on the subject, 393; suspects treachery, 282; visits Leonora, 285; quarrels with Guarini, 286; strikes one of his acquaintances, who tries to assassinate him, 291, and *seq.*; is threatened with a surreptitious edition of his poem, 296; visits Modena, 299; his misery and suspicions, 301; his anxiety to procure a faithful domestic, 304; delirium, 308; attempts to stab a servant, and is confined, 310; is taken to Belriguardo, 312; his disease of imagination, 313; petitions the court of Inquisition, 315; writes to Alphonso, 319; resolves to fly from Ferrara, 321, II. 2; visits his sister in the habit of shepherd, 3; tires of Sorrento, 8; departs to Rome, 10; wishes to return to Ferrara, 13; story of, 15; returns, 19; leaves Ferrara, and wanders to different cities, 25, and *seq.*; seeks and finds protection from the Duke of Urbino, 25, 60, 381; departs to Piedmont, 36; hospitality he meets with on the way, 37; melancholy state in which he reaches Turin, 44; regrets his suspicions, 47; writes dialogues, 50; returns to Ferrara, 56; is confined in an hospital, 58; his lamentations and complaints, 59, 62, 64, 408, and *seq.*; his imprudence, 61, 66, 69; despondence, 67; begins to a dialogue a conversation with a spirit, 69, 170; remarks on his mental alienation and confinement, 78, and *seq.*; grief on the publication of his *Jerusalem*, 73, 95; his diseased perceptions, 100, 110; gives offence by a dialogue, 107, and *seq.*; his controversy with the Crusca, 119, and *seq.*; petitions the city of Bergamo, 158; is disturbed by a sprite, 169, 175, 176; vision of the Blessed Virgin to, 173, 178; is released from prison, 181; resides in Mantua, 184; finishes a tragedy, 188; tires of Mantua, and visits Bergamo, 200; returns to Mantua, 202; publishes his *Torrismondo*, 203; visits Loretto, 216; resides in Rome, 218; writes his sister, 224; and visits Naples, 227; his fondness of monasteries, 227, 261, 271, 308; becomes acquainted with Manso, 228, and *seq.*; his lawsuit, 105, 108, 223, 225, [illegible] 237, 319, 327; his conversation with a spirit, 237, and *seq.*; departs to Rome, 246; his awkward situation there, 248, 252; resides in an hospital, 255; is invited to, and warmly received at Florence, 261; returns to Rome, 265; his sanguine hopes, 267; disappointments, 268, 271; departs to Mantua, *ibid.*; returns to Rome, 277; resides in Naples, 278; lives with Manso, 282; begins a poem on the creation, 285, 300; departs to Rome, and high compliment he receives from a robber, 290; publishes his *Jerusalem Conquered*, 295; is promised a triumph, 317; his gracious reception at Rome, 320; anecdotes concerning him, 323; sickens and retires to the monastery of S. Onofrio, 328; his last letter, 329; death and burial, 335; epitaph, 339; his person, 342; conversation, 346; moral and intellectual character, 347, and *seq.* 352; his lyric poetry, 370, and *seq.*; his prose writings, 375.

Tassoni, quoted, I. 175; remark of, concerning James I. of Scotland, II. 314.
Tatius, Achilles, obligations of Tasso to, I. 369.
Terasson, I. 116; proves the conformity of the *Jerusalem*, with the rules of Aristotle, 213, 373; his remarks on Homer, 374, 400.
Thibaut, Earl of Champagne, song of, I. 78.
Thomson, his *Castle of Indolence*, I. 384, 387.
Thuanus, I. 102; II. 428.
Tiraboschi, mark of, on Tasso's penmanship, I. ; communicates documents to Serassi, 173, 315; quoted, 295, 346; patronised by the family of Este, 349; his sentiments on Tasso's confinement, II. 92; of the style of Tasso, 130; letter of the poet, published by, 244; quoted, 429, 452, 467, &c.
Tivoli, villa of, I. 175.
Tod, Mr, II. 151, 464.
Tolomei, Mr, quoted, II 283.
Toledo, Don Pedro de, Viceroy of Naples, his despotic temper, I. 18; persecutes the prince of Salerno, 32; dies, 35.
Tomasini, quoted, I. 62; II. 328.
Torrismondo, a tragedy of Tasso begun, I. 180; resumed, II. 183; published, 203; remarks on, 204, and *seq.*
Tournaments, whist, I. 75; splendid at Ferrara, 125, 129; decay of, 128.
Trissino unsuccessful as an epic poet, I. 87; II. 303.
Turpin, his work, I. 86.
Tyre, William of, I. 263; II. 180.

U

Urbino, Guidubaldo II. duke of, patronises Bernardo Tasso, I. 48; letter of Tasso to, announcing his father's death, 150; dies, 264.
——— Francesco Maria, duke of, educated with Tasso, 49; marries Lucretia of Este, 152; separates from her, 224; letter of Tasso to, II. 26; long and imprudent address of the poet to, 31, 383, and *seq.*
Crofton, Sir Thomas, his account of Crichton, II. 417, and *seq.*

V

Valois, Margaret of, I. 27, 47, 53.
Venero, letters of, concerning Tasso, I. 310; II. 24.
Vesalio, prince of, his musical genius, II. 313; friendship for Tasso, 314.
Vida imitated by Tasso, II. 361.
Virgil studied mathematics, I. 31; his skill in war, 191; quoted 211, condensation of his style, 217; not sufficiently interesting, 267; his philosophical disposition, 296; fond of Plato, 354; quoted, II. 73, remarks of Tasso, on 479, 480; note on a copy of, in the British Museum, 447.
Voltaire, his opinion of introductory verses, I. 162; his *Zaire* quoted, 108; regrets the subjugation of Greece by the Turks, *ibid.*; verses on the death of Charles IX. 163; quoted, 177, 281, 288; his description of

envy, II. 120; character of Sixtus V. 219; criticism of, on the *Jerus.* 357; prefers it to the *Iliad*, 367; verses of, on Homer, 481.

W

Walker, Mr Cooper, *Pref.* xxxii. 373; II. 63, 68, 97, 210, 236, 261, 292, 307.

Warton, Mr, his hypothesis on romantic fiction, I. 82; error of, concerning Spenser, II. 149; quoted, 469.

Woodhouselee, Lord, *Pref.* xxxii, 208; II. 414, 416, 426, 443, 449.

END OF THE INDEX.

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